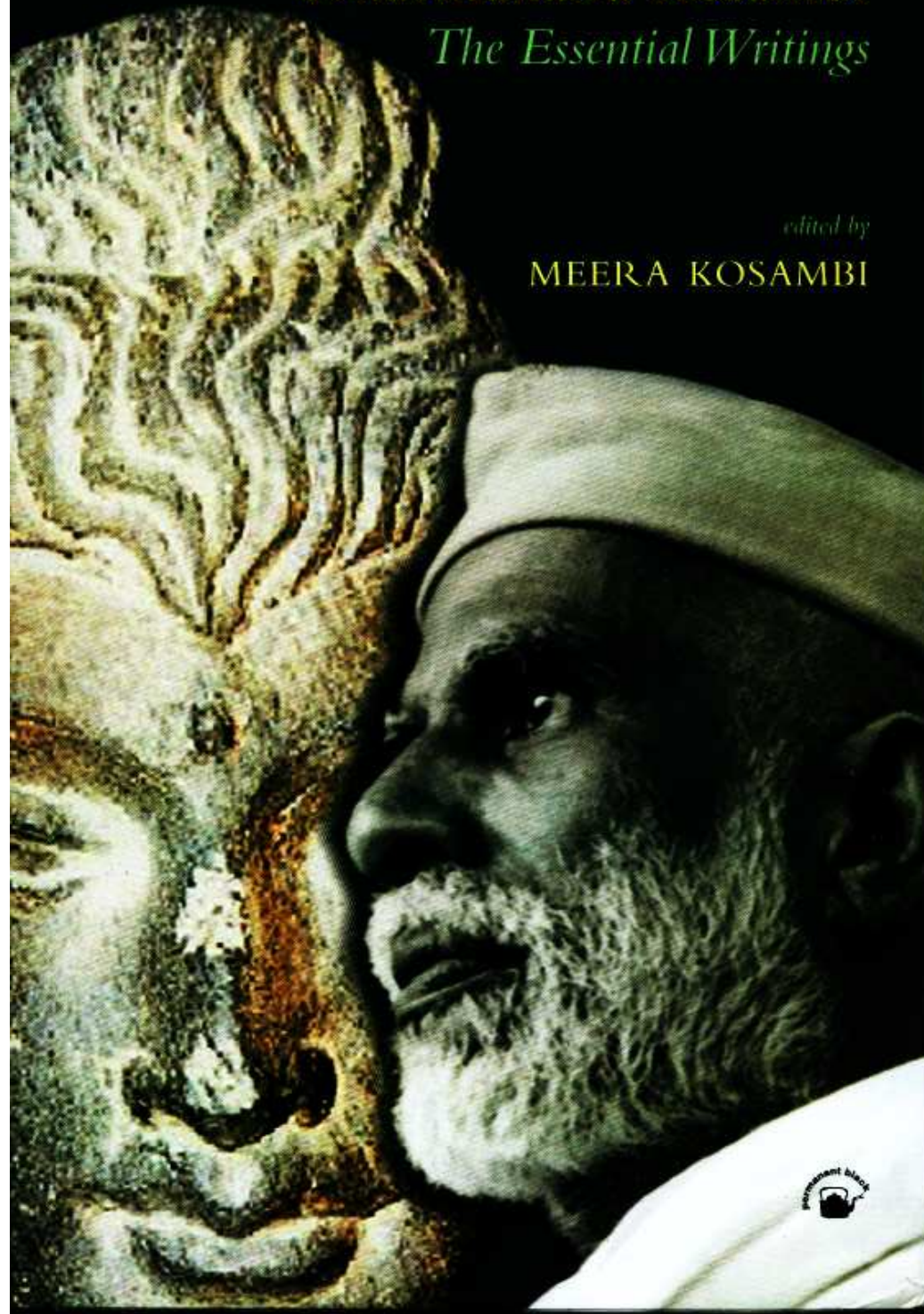


Dharmanand Kosambi  
*The Essential Writings*

*edited by*

MEERA KOSAMBI



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## Preface

I did not know my grandfather, Dharmanand Kosambi. A shocking statement, but true. He visited us at Pune only once, when I was about three years old; and my image of him as an elderly man with a beard may be based less on actual memory and more on his photograph on our drawing-room wall. He passed away—voluntarily, by giving up all sustenance—five years later, at Gandhiji's ashram in Vardha. My father, ever reticent in matters personal, did not talk about his relationship with his parents or siblings. Thus my relationship with Grandfather is not anchored in affective involvement, but is a vain effort (in both senses of the term) to claim him as an intellectual ancestor. The presumption is obvious. I am the type of scholar who complains bitterly of a few entire days spent in libraries and dusty archives with only a meagre snack for lunch and not a single energizing cup of tea (which I consume by the mugful at home). Grandfather on the other hand had, in his Buddhist quest, trudged barefoot up steep mountains through occasional snow to Nepal, and lived in austere solitude in various parts of India, Sri Lanka, and Burma, on the edge of physical survival.

Another reason for diffidence is the need to translate into English the Marathi works of a scholar who wrote excellent English himself. His introduction to *Visuddhi-magga*, which he critically edited for the Harvard Oriental Series, and his very few other English writings that I have been able to trace show his thorough mastery over English as well as Pali (and textual criticism). Additionally, he had studied Sanskrit with the best teachers, knew Hindi and Gujarati well, had taken a course in Russian at Harvard, and probably had a smattering of Burmese and Sinhalese. (We can see how his son, D.D. Kosambi, became a polyglot.) Yet he wrote mainly in Marathi, his objective being to disseminate the benefits of Buddhism to as wide an audience as possible

in Maharashtra. Had he written the same books, or at least some of them, in English, they would have been authoritative and put an end to many loose interpretations and controversies about the Buddha's life and teachings, and about Pali texts, among both Indian and Western scholars. Grandfather rarely criticized any of these, but Dr V.A. Sukhtankar has analysed the situation succinctly in his Foreword to *Buddha, Dharma ani Sangha* (1910). After acknowledging the pioneering contribution of Western scholars to Pali and Buddhist Studies, he argues that the complexities of Indian culture, and 'our ancient way of thinking, and the essence of Pali and Sanskrit texts', often eluded them. At the same time, Indian scholars tended to rely too heavily upon Western interpretations and were not necessarily meticulous. Sukhtankar contrasts this with Dharmanand Kosambi's first-hand knowledge of both the doctrine and practice of Buddhism.

But the present book is not, as I said, an attempt to reinstate Grandfather. He is already renowned as a Buddhist scholar among the better educated Marathi readers, and has been for decades, if not a century—his first article appeared in 1909! I have only tried to present to English-speaking readers the man and the scholar whom I in fact rediscovered while working on this book. The research has been very rewarding in terms of revealing the extent of his original and critical thinking on Buddhism and socio-political matters. A bibliography of his writings appended at the end of this book numbers some twenty Marathi books—including a play on Bodhisattva—and as many of his articles as I was able to trace.

I have referred to Grandfather as 'Dharmanand' here and in the Introduction. This is in keeping with the Marathi convention of using the first name, along with the plural pronoun denoting the honorific—a distinction that unfortunately cannot be made in English. His name is spelt 'Dharmananda' on the title page of *Visuddhimagga*, but my father wrote his own name as 'Damodar Dharmanand' and I have retained the latter transliteration. Within the family circle, Grandfather was known as Bapu and my father as Baba (though I refer to him hereafter as 'D.D.', the initials by which he was so widely known).

In retrospect, the idea of putting out this book seems so natural that I wonder why I did not think of it earlier. In fact, some years ago I had actually started translating Grandfather's autobiography, *Nivedan*,



but not gone very far. It was Rukun Advani's suggestion—or rather urging—a few months ago that has resulted in this book, and his enthusiasm is responsible for it being completed as a priority.

Writing this book has served for me as a crash refresher course in Buddhism as well as Pali and Sanskrit—my knowledge of these having gone rusty during my decades-long involvement with subjects like sociology and Women's Studies, and languages like Swedish. A generous and willing source of help was Dr M.G. Dhadphale, former Professor of Sanskrit and Pali at Fergusson College and former Honorary Secretary of the Bhandarkar Institute. (He was also my classmate decades ago in the subsidiary Pali class at MA, when he majored in Sanskrit and I in English Literature.) Dr Meena Talim, former Professor and Head of Department of Pali at St Xavier's College and currently Honorary Professor at Somaiyya College, Mumbai, and Visiting Professor at the University of Mumbai, took the time and trouble to read and comment on some of the translations involving Pali passages and Buddhist concepts. Dr Madhavi Kolhatkar of Deccan College of Post-graduate Studies (Deemed University) helped with translations of old Marathi verses of saint poets.

Several scholars connected with the University of Pune have been generous with their time. Professor Ram Bapat, formerly of the Department of Politics; Dr Sadanand More of the Department of Philosophy; and Dr Mangesh Kulkarni of the Department of Politics (who also suggested and even supplied useful books for reference) provided valuable discussions in contextualizing Dharmanand within the socio-political history of Maharashtra. Dr Raosaheb Kasbe, current holder of the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Chair, Dr Pradeep Gokhale of the Department of Philosophy, and Dr Mahesh Deokar, Professor and Head of the Department of Pali (all at the University of Pune), helped to locate Dharmanand within the recent revival of Buddhism in Maharashtra.

An absolutely indispensable resource centre for this exercise was the R.N. Dandekar Library of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute at Pune (established in the name of R.G. Bhandarkar, a scholar whom Grandfather knew well and greatly admired). The librarian, Shri Satish Sangle, provided willing and unstinting help. The Academy of Political and Social Science also provided books, and Shri Datta Desai even

arranged to send them home to me when I was immobilized for a long period by a leg injury. I also consulted the library of the Kesari-Maharatta Trust and the Bai Jerbai Wadia Library of Fergusson College. In Mumbai I consulted the Mumbai Marathi Grantha-Sangrahalaya, the Gandhi Memorial Museum and Library (Mani Bhavan), and the Jawaharlal Nehru Library of the University of Mumbai (whose librarian Mrs Vijaya Rajahans was very helpful). Shri Ashim Mukhopadhyay, Library Information Assistant at the National Library, Calcutta, kindly provided the correct nineteenth-century spellings of most of the Bengali personal and place names mentioned in *Nivedan*.

Shri Ramkrishna Naik of the Goa Hindu Association, Mumbai, kindly gave permission to translate extracts from 'Khulasa' reproduced in J.S. Sukhathankar's *Dharmanand*: they are the only extant residue of the article series; the original is unfortunately not available anywhere.

As always, my close friends Professor Zia Karim and Ms Aban Mukherji have been associated with this work, providing useful discussions and encouragement; Aban has also critically read the entire manuscript.

The photos reproduced here have been taken mostly from *Nivedan*, with permission. The frontispiece is from the D.D. Kosambi collection (it was taken by him); Dharmanand's photo dated c. 1909 has been taken from *Manoranjan*, Diwali Issue, 1909.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to all these individuals and institutions for their contribution to this book.

Finally, a note on the translation. An attempt has been made to retain the flavour of early-twentieth-century Marathi, avoiding current—and identifiably 'modern'—usage. The only stylistic change made is the original authorial 'we' to the currently favoured 'I', in most cases. In accordance with the accepted convention, round brackets denote matter in the original; square brackets indicate my additions. No material has been omitted—ellipses in the translation are only reproductions of the original. Dharmanand switches between Sanskrit and Pali words and names within the same text. This has been retained exactly as in the original; occasionally, Sanskrit or Pali equivalents have been added to facilitate easy comprehension. The original footnotes have been retained intact, and added in parentheses to the body of the text, where feasible.

Dharmanand frequently cited Pali and Sanskrit passages or verses and provided Marathi translations (intended for the common reader rather than the scholar), always in the former case and sometimes in the latter. I have used these Marathi translations, rather than the Pali or Sanskrit quotations themselves, for my English translation. Quotations from Sanskrit, Pali, and old Marathi sources have been put in a very visibly different font, partly because they appear in bold letters in many of the originals.

The title 'Bhagavan' as applied to the Buddha has been translated as 'Lord'; 'the Buddha's religion or Dharma' as 'the Dhamma' (for easy identification); and 'the sangha of monks (*bhikkhus*)' as 'the Sangha'. Old place names used in Marathi have been retained as in the original (e.g. Pune, Mumbai), except when these occur in old institutional names (e.g. the Bombay Presidency)—as far as Maharashtra is concerned. In other cases, old English names have been used to facilitate name recognition (e.g. Baroda instead of the Marathi Badode). The names 'Ceylon' and 'Sinhala-dvipa' have been retained in translation as in the original, although I have referred to the country as Sri Lanka in the Introduction. 'Brahmadesh' has been changed to Burma (though it is now Myanmar), again for easy name recognition.

As for transliteration, I have hyphenated long words, names, and book titles for ease of pronunciation and understanding (while respecting the Sanskrit/Pali rules for compounds), although this is not an accepted practice. I personally find inordinately long Sanskrit or Pali words in the Roman script—even with diacritical marks—forbidding. For the same reason I have occasionally transposed certain personal names: for example, Shrisumangalacharya is sometimes changed to Acharya Shri Sumangala, and Shantidevacharya to Acharya Shantidev. It was decided, on the publisher's advice, not to use diacritical marks, because this book—like all of Dharmanand's Marathi writings—is meant for the average reader and not the Indologist. However, an attempt has been made to indicate the correct pronunciation—in the absence of diacritical marks—with 'aa' whenever strictly necessary. This has not been done for other vowels (except in rare cases), in order to avoid unwieldiness.

In conclusion all I can say is that this book has been, more than a labour of love, a partial repayment of my debt of gratitude to Grand-

father, to whom I owe my physical as well as intellectual existence. Despite the rationalism instilled into me since childhood by my father, I cherish the irrational belief that Grandfather has somehow helped this effort along—otherwise I cannot explain the fact that the whole book was completed within just four months (except for a part of the Introduction which dragged on a few months). My earnest hope is that it would have passed muster with him.

Pune, October 2009

MEERA KOSAMBI

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## Introduction

### Situating Dharmanand Kosambi



Dharmanand, c. 1930

Dharmanand Kosambi's life (1876–1947) was largely devoted to a single cherished goal: popularizing the Buddha's message among his fellow Maharashtrians. This humanist mission coexisted with his intellectual career as a Buddhist scholar within academia—in India as well as in countries like the USA and Russia. As a thinker he also attempted to disseminate the ideas of egalitarianism and world peace across national boundaries, blending the ideology of socialism with the ethics of Buddhism and both with Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of truth and non-violence. By seeking to anchor his social and political concerns in spirituality and moral uprightness,

Dharmanand occupies a distinct, albeit relatively solitary, niche in Gandhiji's struggle for Independence.

Despite his mastery of several languages, Dharmanand chose to write in Marathi because of his strong region-specific commitment—though few general readers are familiar today with his copious Marathi output in the field of Buddhist Studies, and fewer still are aware of his contribution as a social and political thinker.

This book seeks to show the manifold dimensions of Dharmanand's personality, and of his intellectual and ideological journey, by retrieving his salient writings on all these topics. The Introduction attempts to outline his life, and contextualize as well as discuss his writings—including those for which there was insufficient space within the present book. Of the writings included here, some were relatively easily available, others were traced after intensive research. My attempt here is to situate Dharmanand within his contemporary social, political, and intellectual milieus. The Introduction ends with a discussion of his perceived status and relevance today.



Born on 9 October 1876, Dharmanand scripted for himself a trajectory of intellectual and ideological adventure that carried him on a Buddhist quest from a humble, rural family in relatively undeveloped Portuguese Goa to various parts of India and then abroad.<sup>1</sup> Dharma—he later called himself Dharmanand—was born in a Gaud Saraswat Brahmin family of Sankhwal in Goa, the youngest of seven siblings (five sisters, two brothers). His weak constitution and slow development led to his father, Damodar Ramchandra Kosambe, being commiserated over having such a child.<sup>2</sup> After sporadic schooling in various parts of Goa

<sup>1</sup> This short life-sketch is based on Dharmanand's autobiography *Nivedan*, excerpts from his partly autobiographical *Khulasa*, Sukhathankar's biography, and my personal knowledge. (*Nivedan* and excerpts from *Khulasa* are reproduced in Sukhathankar's book.) J.S. Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand: Acharya Dharmanand Kosambi Yanche Atma-charitra ani Charitra*, Mumbai: The Goa Hindu Association, 1976. Other sources used are separately indicated.

<sup>2</sup> The family name—originally Shenai Lotlikar, from the village of Lotli—was changed to Kosambe, possibly when the family sought shelter in a village

and bordering areas, Dharma dropped out of school because of persistent health problems. In his early teens, life stagnated to a dull and deadening routine of managing the family's coconut grove. Additionally, his family, following the social custom of early marriage, thrust this upon him when he was fourteen, which reduced him to further despair. He found salvation in a passion for Marathi books and magazines—covering a wide range from contemporary reformist essays to centuries-old devotional poetry. He was to remain a voracious reader all his life and frequently voiced the sentiment that books were his best friends. Wide reading and discussions with a small but supportive circle of like-minded friends helped him to develop clear ideas of social, political, and religious reform, and also to improve his Marathi tremendously: his mother tongue, Konkani, was yet to be developed as a written language of literature and knowledge. Drawing spiritual sustenance from the lives of Sant Tukaram and Gautama Buddha, he resolved to dedicate the rest of his life to a study of Buddhism.

Although cocooned in a close-knit community that had linkages well beyond the village, Dharmanand found the courage to strike out on his own.<sup>3</sup> After a few half-hearted attempts to leave home in search of the highly valued Sanskrit education, he finally made an adventurous plan—after his father's death and with borrowed money—to go to Pune for the purpose, leaving his wife Balabai in her natal home with their new-born infant daughter, Manik. At the end of 1899, at the age of twenty-three, Dharmanand left Goa and reached Pune in early 1900.

At Pune, the educational and cultural heartland of Maharashtra, his

of that name because of forced religious conversions during Portuguese rule. Dharmanand changed it to 'Kosambi'—the Pali name for the ancient city of Kaushambi. (The Goa branch of the family still calls itself Kosambe or Kossambe.) The Maharashtrian custom was (and still is) for a newborn son to be named after his grandfather if the latter is deceased. Thus Dharmanand's older brother was named Ramchandra, and Dharmanand named his own son Damodar.

<sup>3</sup> For a scholarly description of the history, economy, and social structure of the Goan village community, with distinctive personal touches, see D.D. Kosambi, 'The Village Community in the "Old Conquests" of Goa', in *Myth and Reality*, rptd, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1983 (1962), pp. 152–71.

Sanskrit studies progressed slowly, but he developed the confidence to mix in educated and cultured circles. His contact with Dr R.G. Bhandarkar—incidentally a fellow Saraswat—and through him with the Prarthana Samaj, was to last long. It was also at Pune that Dharmanand made a vow to study Buddhism and propagate it through writings in Marathi—a vow he assiduously kept throughout his life, although at the time he did not know that the original Buddhist texts were written in Pali (initially known as Magadhi), which was derived from Sanskrit, nor where to find these texts.

By now he had developed the courage to venture further afield. For the next six years he travelled extensively despite chronic poverty, either on foot or with money donated to him, within India and outside. By stages he reached Kashi (also Banaras or Varanasi) via Ujjain and Gwalior, among other places, with help from fellow Maharashtrians settled in various parts of North India. At Kashi he studied under the most renowned Sanskrit teacher of his time, Gangadhar-shastri Telang, for more than a year which proved full of financial hardship as well as discrimination suffered at the hands of allegedly superior Brahmin subcastes.<sup>4</sup> Here Dharmanand met a fellow student from Nepal and seized the opportunity to accompany him to Kathmandu, supposedly a centre of Buddhist religion and learning. The journey—which involved trudging barefoot up mountainous terrain through occasional snow—ended in disillusionment because of the decline of Buddhism in Nepal at the time.

At this point the problem of an uncertain future cropped up again. Dharmanand resolved it by going to Buddhagaya, near the Hindu pilgrimage town of Gaya, which he thought was likely to have some Buddhist presence. But the Buddhism here turned out to be nominal, and he was advised to go to Sri Lanka, where Buddhism indubitably flourished. This he did with the help of the Mahabodhi Sabha of Calcutta (now Kolkata). The complicated journey—first to Calcutta, then to Sri Lanka via Madras (now Chennai)—was accomplished in early

<sup>4</sup> The Brahmin subcastes that were socially and culturally dominant (such as the Chitpavans or Konkanasthas, Deshasthas, and Karhades in Maharashtra) looked down upon the Saraswats and even questioned their Brahmin credentials because of the inclusion of fish in the latter's otherwise strictly vegetarian diet.

1902. In Sri Lanka Dharmanand was finally able to learn Pali and start studying the core Buddhist texts; he was also formally initiated into the Buddhist monastic order, or Sangha, as a novice.

From Sri Lanka he returned to India after a year for health reasons: he had difficulties with the food. Continuing his Buddhist quest, from Madras he went to Burma (now Myanmar) with the help of some Burmese Buddhists, and was there ordained as a full-fledged Buddhist monk. But he was compelled yet again to return to Calcutta in early 1904 by the same dietary difficulties. He then made a pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy places of North India. In December 1904 he went again to Burma, this time to learn and practise meditation, returning from there to Calcutta in January 1906.

This visit to Calcutta in 1906 was to change Dharmanand's fortunes—by placing him within the mainstream of academic life. He gave up monkhood after carrying out the required rites on account of the difficulty involved in observing the necessary rules and practices in the absence of a Buddhist Sangha; unlike Hinduism, this was allowed by Buddhism. A wide circle of influential friends and acquaintances—including the linguist Harinath De, Professor Manmohan Ghosh (brother of the militant nationalists Aurobindo and Barindra Kumar), Satyendranath Tagore (who had earlier made a successful career as a civil servant in the Bombay Presidency), and Justice Asutosh Mookerjee—enabled him to introduce Pali into the curriculum of National College from its inception in 1906, and later to teach it as Reader at the University of Calcutta until 1908.<sup>5</sup>

After a gap of more than six years, Dharmanand also visited Goa in 1906 and met his family. His wife accompanied him back to Calcutta, but health problems there made her return to Goa after a few months. In July 1907 their son, Damodar, was born in Goa, and in 1910 a

<sup>5</sup> The Bengal National College and the Bengal Technical Institute were founded in 1906 by the National Council of Education, Bengal, as part of the national education movement in the wake of Curzon's autocratic educational policies and the partition of Bengal in 1905. The two institutions were merged in 1910, but National College closed down in 1917. The Technical Institute became Jadavpur Engineering College and in 1955 Jadavpur University with the addition of the arts and sciences faculties. I am grateful to Professor Jasodhara Bagchi and Professor Ramakrishna De for this information.

daughter, Manorama. Their last child, a daughter, Kamala, was born years later in 1918.

In Calcutta a meeting with Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda—renowned for his patronage of education and learning, as also for the various social reforms he had introduced in his state—once again changed the direction of Dharmanand's life.<sup>6</sup> Sayajirao offered him a small monthly stipend to work in Maharashtra and write books on Buddhism, and in 1908 Dharmanand left Calcutta despite an attempt to retain him by raising his salary. In September 1908 he visited Burma—for the third time—for almost a month to buy some important Pali books, for himself and for Calcutta University. He then went to Mumbai, and finally to Pune with a view to settling there with his family. In 1909 he also delivered five lectures on Buddhism in Baroda; three of these were published, with funding from Sayajirao, as *Buddha, Dharma, ani Sangha* (included in translation in the present volume.)

Despite his lavish praise of Sayajirao's generosity, Dharmanand felt free enough to be critical as well. At one of these lectures he criticized Sayajirao's refusal to shut down liquor shops in Baroda unless an alternative source of revenue was found: Dharmanand contrasted this with the emperor Ashoka's more enlightened stand. At the end of the lecture Sayajirao—who had chaired the meeting—left without delivering his scheduled concluding address; the consequent trepidation in the audience was, however, belied by his prompt order to shut down the liquor shops.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, Sayajirao's friendship with Dharmanand deepened.

In Mumbai Dharmanand agreed to teach Pali to Dr James H. Woods, a professor of Sanskrit at Harvard University and a friend of Dr V.A. Sukhtankar, a Sanskritist and Prarthana Samajist who

<sup>6</sup> Gaikwad, or H.H. the Maharaja Gaekwar, was by all accounts an enlightened ruler. The Baroda social reforms included laws permitting widow remarriage (1901), preventing child marriage (1904), and allowing Hindu women to seek divorce under certain conditions (1931). Y.D. Phadke, *Social Reform Movements in Maharashtra*, New Delhi: Maharashtra Information Centre, Government of Maharashtra, 1989, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> P.M. Lad, 'Dharmanand Kosambi', in *Akash-ganga*, Mumbai: Popular Book Depot, 1957, pp. 17–23 (pp. 21–2).

was part of Dharmanand's wide network of friends.<sup>8</sup> Later, in early 1910 Woods wrote to invite Dharmanand urgently to Harvard, to assist Professor Lanman there in preparing a critical edition of the Pali text *Visuddhi-magga*.

Buddhaghosha's *Visuddhi-magga* (Sanskrit: Vishuddhi-marga, The Path to Complete Purification, i.e. Nirvana, c. AD 400) is said to epitomize the Buddhist canon known as the *Tripitaka*—three divisions or 'pitakas' (literally baskets)—*Abhidhamma Pitaka*, *Sutta Pitaka*, and *Vinaya Pitaka*.<sup>9</sup> Buddhaghosha (so named because his voice was deep like the Buddha's) was a South Indian who converted to Buddhism in Gaya and at his guru's behest went to Sri Lanka at the end of the fourth century AD to study the authoritative texts and commentaries which were extant only in Sinhalese because of the continuous tradition of Buddhism in that country. He then wrote *Visuddhimagga* as well as various commentaries or *atthakathas* in Pali for the benefit of Indians.<sup>10</sup> The work of editing the former text at Harvard was based on the four manuscript versions (two in Burmese and two in Sinhalese script) which Henry Clarke Warren (1854–99) had collected.<sup>11</sup> The work

<sup>8</sup> V.A. Sukhtankar, a Prarthana Samaj member, had been sent on a Unitarian scholarship in 1903 to Oxford, where he studied philosophy for two years. He then spent a year at Bonn University, Germany, on another scholarship and gained a Ph.D. before returning to India. Dwarkanath Govind Vaidya, *Prarthana-samajacha Itihas* (A History of the Prarthana Samaj), Mumbai: Prarthana-samaj, 1927, pp. 133–4.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix IV of 'The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha' for a further classification of the *Pitakas*.

<sup>10</sup> Dharmananda [sic] Kosambi, 'Preface', *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosha-cariya*, edited by Henry Clarke Warren, revised by Dharmananda Kosambi, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950 (Harvard Oriental Series Vol. 41), pp. ix–xviii. See also Dharmanand Kosambi, 'Acharya Buddhaghosha' [in Marathi], *The Fergusson College Magazine*, vol. IV, no. 3, April 1913, pp. 97–104.

<sup>11</sup> Kosambi, 'Preface', *Visuddhimagga*. See also Kaushambi [sic], Dharmananda, 'A New Edition of the Visuddhi-Magga', *The Fergusson College Magazine*, vol. 3, no. 2, April 1912, pp. 5–9. I am grateful to Professor V.M. Bachal, former principal of Fergusson College, and Shri B.A. Kamble, librarian of the college's Wadia Library, for making available old issues of the college magazine.



was undertaken by Professor Charles Rockwell Lanman (1850–1941), who taught Sanskrit first at Johns Hopkins University (1876–80) and then at Harvard University from 1880 (to retire in 1926). Lanman and Warren, his student at Johns Hopkins, founded the Harvard Oriental Series in 1891.<sup>12</sup> It was in this series that the edited text was to be published in the Roman script.

The reason Dharmanand accepted the invitation was that he himself had then been engaged in preparing a Devanagari edition of the same text to be published under the patronage of Gaikwad.<sup>13</sup> He went to the USA in 1910 and returned from there in January 1912. During this time work on the edition was thought to have been completed. Dharmanand 'rejoice[d] to think that I have partly [re]paid the debt I owe to my Acharyas, who not only gave me spiritual food but also took care of my body.'<sup>14</sup> He believed then that 'It now remains for Prof. Lanman to make a fair copy and carry it through the press.' But the work would require further labour in later years at Harvard by Dharmanand. Dharmanand's interaction with Lanman involved some friction because, as he says, initially he had to overcome 'Prof. Lanman's comprehensive lack of faith in Panini's grammar as well as modern Indian pundits'; later they had a disagreement about 'the final constitution of the title page'.<sup>15</sup> But even if during this first stay in the USA Dharmanand did not quite finish the Harvard project as fully as he would have liked, he did greatly expand his general interests and reading to include the social sciences and socialism. His narrow religious and spiritual preoccupation now broadened to also include social and political concerns—as well as the need for regular physical exercise.



<sup>12</sup> Edward Perry Warren, 'Foreword', *Visuddhimagga*, pp. xix–xxi.

<sup>13</sup> This work was delayed until 1940. Dharmananda [sic] Kosambi, 'Preface', *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosacariya*, Part I: Text, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1940, pp. ix–xviii (p. ix).

<sup>14</sup> Kaushambi, 'A New Edition', p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Dharmanand describes the nature of the disagreement about the title page in *Nivedan*.



Dharmanand, c. 1909

After settling in Maharashtra in 1908, Dharmanand achieved immediate renown. A major reason was support from the Prarthana Samaj, a society established in 1867 to work for religious and social reform, and with which leading reformers like Justice Ranade, Dr Bhandarkar, Justice Chandavarkar, and Vitthal Ramji Shinde were connected.<sup>16</sup> Bhandarkar was impressed by Dharmanand's phenomenal intellectual achievements and academic career in Calcutta. Starting from late 1908, Dharmanand became ensconced in the Samaj circle and was invited—usually by the Young Theists' Union established by V.R. Shinde—to deliver lectures on Buddhism, these being reported in detail by the Samaj's organ, the Anglo-Marathi *Subodha Patrika*.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The Prarthana Samaj opened schools, especially for girls, a shelter for homeless women, and also the first orphanage in the Bombay Presidency. Another interest within the Samaj was the abolition of caste discrimination. V.R. Shinde, a Prarthana Samaj missionary who had studied for two years (1901–3) in Oxford on a Unitarian scholarship, worked for the Depressed Classes Mission part time from 1906 and full time from 1910.

<sup>17</sup> *Subodha Patrika*, 13 and 27 December 1908, 10 January 1909, 21 and 28 February 1909, 7 and 14 March 1909, 2 May 1909, 11 July 1909.

The Samaj had created a new paradigm of religious tolerance and openness to other religions which flourished especially in the cosmopolitan milieu and relatively liberal ethos of Mumbai. The new interest in Buddhism was welcomed by its members.<sup>18</sup> But it could also lead to controversy. In one lecture Dharmanand contrasted Buddhism, especially its stress on non-violence, with the Vedic religion's advice to 'kill aggressors without hesitation'. This brought a prompt objection from a reader who posited a sharp opposition between the two religious traditions—which Dharmanand had avoided—and that was then followed by a rebuttal by Dharmanand.<sup>19</sup>

More Marathi writings on Buddhism by Dharmanand appeared in newspapers and magazines, especially the monthly magazine *Manoranjan* which published his debut article on Ashoka's rock edicts in 1909 (included in this volume in translation) and the Marathi translation of *Sigala-sutta* in 1910 (which was later included as an appendix in *Buddha, Dharma ani Sangha*, also included in translation in the present volume). These are brief attempts to introduce Buddhist history and philosophy to Marathi readers and broaden their horizons. He also wrote in *The Indian Antiquary* in 1910 and 1912, and located himself firmly within the newly awakened interest in Indology—a field to which Dr R.G. Bhandarkar and his sons, Devadatta and Shridhar, made substantial contributions.

The most sustained and serious effort in this direction was Dharmanand's *The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha* (1910) which seeks to capture the essence of Buddhism through the life of the Buddha, his doctrine, and the structure and evolution of the Buddhist Sangha. Its merits and shortcomings are succinctly listed in V.A. Sukhtankar's Foreword:

Birth in a Brahmin family in our own country, sharp intelligence, a religious bent of mind, mastery over Sanskrit; subsequent travels to countries like Ceylon and Burma where Buddhism is prevalent, life in the viharas there as a Buddhist monk, and a thorough study of Buddhist religious texts in the original Pali under renowned Buddhist

<sup>18</sup> Idem, 17 April 1910.

<sup>19</sup> Idem, 4, 11, 18, and 25 July 1909.

teachers; undertaking these studies not for fame or out of intellectual curiosity, but because of complete faith in the Buddha's religion and after enduring numerous, terrible calamities; and in addition to all this, a critical and historical method of analysis that would do any twentieth-century scholar proud. All these qualities would undoubtedly make whatever Professor Dharmanand Kosambi writes about Buddhism worthy of respect among thoughtful scholars, and prove highly instructive not only to us Indians but also to scholars well known as experts on Buddhism in Western countries.

Buddhism is a vast subject; this small book can contain only a gist, and in some places it is bound to be difficult to understand. Even so, the author has very skilfully collected all the important material and presented it to his readers in as simple a style as possible. In some ways, this small book gives a better idea of Buddhism than large volumes written by Westerners.<sup>20</sup>

Here Sukhtankar captures something both deep and paradoxical: Dharmanand's impartial knowledge of Buddhism from the inside, his perspective rooted both in learning and intense faith. Western scholarship, born of intellectual curiosity alone, is often handicapped by a cultural divide that Dharmanand has bridged. Sukhtankar's comments also reveal recognition of the extent of Western hegemony over Buddhist scholarship. So it seems unfortunate that Western scholars—as well as many Indian scholars outside Maharashtra—have remained unaware of Dharmanand's copious work on Buddhism, all written in Marathi because of his focus on outreach rather than academic distinction. Sukhtankar is also candid enough to admit that some parts of the book are not easily intelligible. Obviously, Dharmanand faced the usual problem of an expert trying to compress a complex body of knowledge into a simplified gist. This is most palpable in the section on 'The Dhamma', where the wealth of detail can be confusing for the average person who is Dharmanand's intended reader.

The review in *Subodha Patrika* makes similar points. It also expresses satisfaction that Dharmanand's book will dispel the ignorance

<sup>20</sup> V.A. Sukhtankar, 'Prastavana' (Foreword), in Dharmanand Kosambi, *Buddha, Dharma ani Sangha*, Mumbai: Nirnayasagar Press, 1910, pp. 1–3 (p. 2), my translation.

which is to be found even among educated Indians about a religion which arose in their own country and spread outwards through Asia, influencing the lives of a third of the world's population yet vanishing in its land of origin. The book contains, according to the reviewer, 'information about Buddhism culled from the original religious texts and packed into a little over a hundred pages'; and a perusal of it will 'definitely yield the benefit of reading two dozen books in English', besides disproving 'the erroneous statements made about Buddhism by many English writers, because of misunderstanding, false pride, or other reasons.' The reviewer values the author for having 'made no statement without substantiation, or criticized other religions in order to praise Buddhism, or painted a brightly coloured picture of Buddhism to dazzle readers. Every statement has been made very carefully, in moderate language, with a balanced mind, and tested rationally.'<sup>21</sup>

That a book of this nature was so warmly received conjures up the vision of an educated reading public which thirsted after knowledge, harboured a serious interest in all religions, and treated books as a source of enlightenment rather than amusement. What also needs to be recognized by way of context is that, when the book appeared, Marathi literature was a *tabula rasa* as far as Buddhism was concerned. Only three Marathi books on the Buddha's life had been written earlier, and they were all by authors who had no first-hand knowledge of Pali or Buddhism.<sup>22</sup>

During this eventful period Dharmanand found a niche for himself also in a much larger community: that of Maharashtrians. This was something of a giant leap from the time of his first encounter with the people of Pune—including fellow Saraswats who (or whose ancestors) had emigrated from Goa—and who 'othered' Goans as less educated and refined. But now the monthly magazine *Manoranjan*, in its Diwali issue of 1909 (which also contained Dharmanand's article on Ashoka's rock edicts), highlighted the writings and photographs of eminent

<sup>21</sup> *Subodha Patrika*, 5 February 1911, my translation.

<sup>22</sup> These were: a booklet by V.L. Athavale (1883); an adaptation of *The Light of Asia* by G.N. Kane (1894); and a book by K.A. Keluskar (1898)—see Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, p. 227. The last-named work is said to have first aroused B.R. Ambedkar's interest in Buddhism during his childhood.

Maharashtrian men and women, and here Dharmanand's photograph appeared on a page devoted to the 'great sons' (*suputra*) of Maharashtra, alongside Wrangler R.P. Paranjpye, principal of Fergusson College, as well as others.<sup>23</sup> Though he never severed his umbilical cord with Goa, Dharmanand cherished his 'Maharashtrianess' all his life.

A turn towards the synthesis of Buddhism and socialism also emerges at this time in Dharmanand's writing. The first indication of this is his long letter to *Kesari*—the Tilak group's Marathi-language paper—in 1910 (included as Selection 5 herein) about the ancient North Indian republics within which there inhered a democratic ethos, and about the Buddhist Sangha as an institution based upon the socialist principle of collective ownership and common decision-making. It is interesting that while others in India discussed socialism as a foreign ideology, Dharmanand consistently sought to trace its compatibility with ancient Indian thought. Importantly, here he presents socialism—of the pre-Russian Revolution era—as the ultimate stage of democracy; his response to socialism was to undergo a gradual change, especially in view of the violence involved in the Russian revolution and in Marxist thinking as well.<sup>24</sup> This letter to *Kesari* was sent from the USA, where socialism had made a strong impact on his worldview. As he says elsewhere, he had read avidly on the subject and was familiar with the activities of the American Federation of Labor, the Socialist Party of America, and the Christian Socialists. Interestingly, Dharmanand had also been a regular reader of *Kesari* all through, seeking it out even during his absence from Maharashtra; he read it even in Kashi as he mentions in *Khulasa*.<sup>25</sup> Later he received it in the USA from N.C. Kelkar, who was its editor during B.G. Tilak's incarceration at Mandalay. At the end of *Nivedan* Dharmanand mentions having sent some books on Marxism to Kelkar, hoping to ensure a wider publicity for the socialist ideology through the paper; but this hope remained unfulfilled.

From Harvard Dharmanand also sent an article about the labour question to G.G. Agarkar's Anglo-Marathi weekly *Sudharak* (which is

<sup>23</sup> *Manoranjan*, Diwali Anka, 1909.

<sup>24</sup> I would like to thank Dr Sadanand More for stressing the 'pre-Russian Revolution' angle here.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, p. 187.

unfortunately not available now, except for a few intermittent issues) and a four-part article to *Subodha Patrika* (included in the present volume as Selection 6). This was one of the earliest attempts to introduce Marx and socialism within the reform discourse of Maharashtra, if not India, as will be seen below.

The labour question had not earlier entered Maharashtra's mainstream—i.e. upper caste—reform discourse in a big way. The economic issue that was prioritized here was the condition of peasants. But the mobilization of mill-workers had formed part of Jotiba Phule's lower-caste movement, and his associate N.M. Lokhande had struggled hard for workers' rights in the 1890s.<sup>26</sup> Also, the long working hours of mill-hands, including women and children, and their overcrowded living conditions in Mumbai had generally registered on the city's residents as well as on visitors to this 'Manchester of India'. In his article Dharmanand suggests a joint effort by the government, the municipality, and the industrialists along Western lines.

Dharmanand persisted in his efforts to popularize the ideology of Marxism in Maharashtra. On returning to India, in May 1912 he delivered a public lecture in Pune titled 'Karl Marx' in the annual Spring Lecture Series known as 'Vasant Vyakhyana Mala'.<sup>27</sup> Dharmanand's espousal of the new ideology of equality of status and power was clearly unpalatable to at least some in the audience. A short speech that followed the lecture stressed the divine right of kings and protested against the exercise of power by the lower classes. Four years later, almost to the day, Dharmanand chose to deliver a lecture in the same series on 'Socialism and the Current World War'. This time he spoke about the World War as a result of strong nationalism in European countries, which obstructed feelings of brotherhood across national boundaries despite attempts by trade unions to promote it in the interest of world peace. The gist of the lecture was obviously unacceptable to N.C. Kelkar, who chaired the meeting. He not only justified the Maharashtrian inability to grasp socialism on the grounds that it was

<sup>26</sup> Manohar Kadam, *Bharatiya Kamgar Chalvaliche Janak Narayan Meghaji Lokhande*, 3rd edn, Pune: M. Phule Samata Pratishthan, 2002 (1995). I am grateful to Shri Vidyadhar Date for suggesting this book.

<sup>27</sup> *Kesari*, 28 May 1912.

very new even in Europe, but also reached the surprising conclusion that the seemingly contradictory ideas of nationalism and universal brotherhood coexisted within socialism.<sup>28</sup>

It would thus seem that Dharmanand's was the first effort to introduce socialism consistently and in detail to a Marathi-speaking public. The actual entry of Marx into Maharashtra's, and even India's, intellectual discourse has been traced to B.G. Tilak's reproduction of an article from an English journal—with a mention of communism and some of its first representatives—in *The Mahratta*, in April 1881.<sup>29</sup> In May 1881 Tilak again reproduced an English article about capitalist exploitation of the working class and prefaced it with remarks supporting workers. After taking over editorship of *Kesari* from Agarkar in 1886, Tilak wrote occasional articles supporting workers—as well as peasants—and gained great popularity with the industrial labour of Mumbai. But there was a contradiction in Tilak's thinking. Like other nationalist leaders, such as Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, V.N. Mandlik, and Agarkar, Tilak had also opposed the Factories Act of 1881 as an attempt by the Lancashire lobby to handicap its Indian competition.<sup>30</sup> Thus, whether this can be construed as propagation of the socialist ideology is doubtful. Tilak also deployed socialist terminology during his visit to England in 1918–19, although his understanding of Marx and socialism lacked depth.<sup>31</sup>

The credit for properly explaining Marx and socialism to Maharashtra in Marathi—from 1910 onwards—thus goes to Dharmanand, a fact that has not been recognized. It is generally believed that these ideas were brought into the ken of Marathi readers by the Communist Party, and especially Comrade S.A. Dange; but their efforts can be dated to the 1920s.<sup>32</sup> Socialism gained appeal mainly as a response to

<sup>28</sup> Idem, 16 May 1916.

<sup>29</sup> J.V. Naik, 'Lokamanya Tilak on Karl Marx and Class Conflict', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1 May 1999, pp. 1023–5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Y.D. Phadke, *Visavya Shatakati Maharashtra*, Khanda 2 (1914–20), Pune: Shrividya Prakashan, 1989, pp. 161–2.

<sup>32</sup> G.M. Kulkarni, 'Sanskritik Parshvabhumi' (The Cultural Context), in *Marathi Vangmayacha Itihas*, Khanda 6 (1920–50), pt 1, edited by G.M. Kulkarni and V.D. Kulkarni, Pune: Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, 1988,

the Russian Revolution of 1917, prompting those like Jawaharlal Nehru to promote it within the Congress through speeches and writings from the late 1920s.<sup>33</sup> Incidentally, Dharmanand himself met Nehru when the latter was elected president of the Lahore Congress in 1929, and presented to him his thoughts on socialism—before the Congress session in which Nehru declared himself a socialist.<sup>34</sup>

In the meanwhile, Buddhism remained Dharmanand's abiding interest and was to draw him into another unexpected controversy. A long article on 'Caste Discrimination' by Dr S.V. Ketkar, a renowned thinker and intellectual novelist, was serially published in *Kesari* from August to November 1913. In the instalment of 19 August he strongly criticized the Buddha for having reinforced the caste system, contrary to popular belief. He claimed, among other things, that the Buddha's only objection was to Brahmins being regarded superior to Kshatriyas, and that the Buddha supported the killing of animals. Dharmanand's heated rejoinder (26 August 1913) attacked these claims as distorted and lacking in historical evidence, despite their author's American degrees. In turn Ketkar rather arrogantly and patronizingly refused to engage in a debate with 'a naïve and devout Buddhist bhikshu' and proceeded to mockingly analyse Dharmanand's 'method of disputation'. He concluded by advising Dharmanand to desist from further argument because 'the search for historical truth is more difficult and brutal than singing the praises of one's guru' (7 October 1913, Supplement). Dharmanand's final word on the subject was to point out that Ketkar had still not proved any of his several 'mischievous' charges against the

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pp. 1–103 (pp. 12–14). Shripad Amrit Dange was one of the founders of the Communist Party of India and the All-India Trade Union Congress (1920). His better-known books are *Gandhi versus Lenin* (c. 1920) and *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery* (1949).

<sup>33</sup> Bipan Chandra et al., *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857–1957*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1991 (1988), pp. 296–300. The impact of Marxism even in Britain, via Harold Laski, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, and the London School of Economics, is well documented as a post-Fabian and post-First World War occurrence. See, for example, Michael Bentley, *The Liberal Mind 1914–1929*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

<sup>34</sup> Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, p. 209.

Buddha, and he himself proceeded to disprove them with quotations from the ancient Buddhist texts (18 October 1913).<sup>35</sup>

As a scholar and thinker Dharmanand had by now made his mark in Maharashtra. As a person, he became known through his autobiographical *Nivedan* (serialized in 1912–16), a fascinating and multi-faceted documentation of a young man's struggle to obtain knowledge, and through it spiritual solace. Originally intended as an account of his travels, it is embedded in a slice of history that spans the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century. (Serialization of the book seems to have stopped in 1916 during World War I. The remaining chapters were written in 1916 or 1917, but published only in 1924 as part of the complete book which, however, did not carry the narrative beyond early 1912.) Here we get an incidental glimpse of 'Greater Maharashtra', which had drawn coastal Goa within its field of cultural influence and made significant extensions into the princely states of Baroda, Indore, and Gwalior. Colonies of Maharashtra settlers were ensconced in most major cities of Central and North India as well, including Kashi. So it was that a young and needy Marathi-speaking Brahmin student—who was also intelligent, hardworking, and courteous—could find shelter and warm hospitality in many places far away from home. In a way this was but an extension of the pan-Indian ethos of honouring holy men and learning in general, without regard to caste or ethnic background; and it was not only Maharashtrians who helped Dharmanand. True to his egalitarian ideals, however, Dharmanand used his Brahmin identity only when he sought a Sanskrit education; at no other time does he seem to have shown or felt any awareness of his caste background, acting always upon his belief in the equality of castes.

But the additional crucial elements were grit, willingness to go without food, travel long distances on foot, and stay focused on the main objective. These carried Dharmanand from India to Nepal, and later to Ceylon, Burma, and also Sikkim in search of Buddhism. P.M. Lad says that 'Dharmanand's account of his great seven-year pilgrimage

<sup>35</sup> This was an aggravating experience, and in later years Dharmanand regretted his failure to maintain a high intellectual standard during the exchange. Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, p. 297.

for obtaining knowledge of Buddhism at times makes the hardships endured by Chinese pilgrims, such as Hiuen Tsang, seem pale. And the difference between the two pilgrimages is that the Chinese travellers were already Buddhist scholars; they only wanted to see the wealth [of knowledge] in the Buddha's homeland. The uneducated Dharmanand wanted to have the Buddha and his religion revealed to him.<sup>36</sup>

Inevitably, this series of adventures makes it a totally male narrative: no woman could have undertaken such a potentially dangerous journey without inviting a series of troubles, and none could have survived it.<sup>37</sup> In fact, there is little mention of women anywhere in the account—in contrast with Dharmanand's later feminist sympathies and advocacy of women's rights. Not that the narrative contains even a tinge of patriarchal or any other type of pride or arrogance; the author's humility is constant enough to be genuine. The fact, however, remains that he had as good as abandoned his wife and daughter for about seven years while he wandered in search of knowledge—a fact highlighted in the fictionalized biography of him and his wife written by their granddaughter, Indrayani Sawkar.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> P.M. Lad, 'Dharmanand Kosambi', in *Akash-ganga*, Mumbai: Popular Book Depot, 1957, pp. 17–23 (p. 19), my translation. Lad, an ICS officer and Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, was a friend of Dharmanand's and scholar of Sanskrit and Pali (which latter he had learnt from Dharmanand).

<sup>37</sup> One is reminded of Virginia Woolf's argument about women's social handicaps which rendered some achievements impossible. She argues that had Shakespeare had a sister who was 'extraordinarily gifted' and equally adventurous and imaginative, she could not have travelled to London and made a career in the theatre as he did. Even if she had overcome her lack of schooling and family pressure to marry early, and made it to London, men would have 'laughed in her face' at the idea of her acting. Finally, a 'protective' actor-manager would have taken advantage of her and her young life would have ended in suicide. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1984, pp. 44–5. (*A Room of One's Own* was first published in 1924.) No woman could have duplicated Dharmanand's Odyssey either—in any age, his own or ours.

<sup>38</sup> Indrayani Sawkar, *Bala-Bapu* (Marathi), Mumbai: Dharmanand Kosambi Smarak Trust, 1999. Sawkar, daughter of Manorama Sathe, née Kosambi, has written insightfully about Balabai's humiliation consequent to this 'abandonment'.

*Nivedan* was intended more as a travelogue than a memoir, and as a conflation of the two genres it is somewhat reminiscent of Godse Bhatji's *Maza Pravas* (My Travels, 1907), a posthumously published narrative which included an eyewitness account of some of the scattered fighting in North India in 1857.<sup>39</sup> Godse (1827–c.1906), an impoverished young Brahmin from a Konkan village, travelled north to the Maratha princely states to seek his fortune, and in the process wandered into the epicentre of the 1857 uprising—he was in fact at Jhansi during the fateful battle. His matter-of-fact narration oscillates between the breathtakingly dramatic and the quotidian, and is undergirded by the author's orthodox Brahmin preoccupation with religious ritual.

Dharmanand's travelogue-memoir is equally matter-of-fact; it is an even-tempered, balanced, unruffled narration that carefully avoids drama. The agony of walking barefoot in the snow on the way to Nepal is dealt with in a masterly one-line understatement; and ecstasy at his first sighting of Himalayan peaks merits a spontaneous citation of Kalidasa's verses as well as attribution of his unbelievable progress to the Buddha's greatness.

As a memoir *Nivedan* locates itself within the newly emerging Marathi prose genre, inspired by English biographies and autobiographies either in the original or in translation. In its ethos and spirit it comes closest to D.K. Karve's *Atma-vritta* (An Autobiography, 1915)—a modest, self-deprecating account of the author's 'mediocre' achievement. (Incidentally, Dharmanand and Karve were colleagues at Fergusson College in Pune where the latter taught mathematics until 1914.) Karve (1858–1962) claimed to be 'aware of the fact that I have not done anything great', and his effort was aimed at inspiring 'young men and women of medium ability [by showing] that there are things that can be achieved even by an ordinary person.'<sup>40</sup> This remarkable document traces Karve's childhood in a Brahmin family of modest

<sup>39</sup> Vishnubhat Godse, *Maza Pravas* (My Travels), edited by D.V. Potdar, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, rptd, Pune: Venus Prakashan, 1974. The book was published posthumously for fear of it being considered seditious.

<sup>40</sup> Dhondo Keshav Karve, 'Prastavana' (Foreword), *Atma-vritta* (An Autobiography), 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Hingane: Anatha-balikashram, 1928 (1915), pp. 21–2, my translation.



circumstances; his struggle to obtain an education in his Konkan village, and later in Mumbai where he supported himself with a stressful round of tutoring younger students; his intense interest in lightening the lot of Brahmin widows; his marriage to a widow after the death of his first wife and resultant social persecution; the establishment of a residential school for girls and widows (modelled on Pandita Ramabai's Sharada Sadan); the establishment of a women's college; and finally a women's university (later known as the SNDT Women's University).

Both Karve's and Dharmanand's autobiographies share a basic humility about their achievements; the former displays an 'institutional man' who was well entrenched in a community and the latter an individual who trod a solitary path. Not having anticipated the possibility of writing about himself, Karve had not kept a diary or notes, and wrote from memory, aided by the proceedings of meetings and reports of the institutions he was involved with. Why Dharmanand kept a diary and notes is not known; he too could not have foreseen writing his personal narrative. But this was probably a habit inculcated in many men of his generation and in the preceding one, as seen most impressively from *Arunodaya* (Sunrise, 1884), the memoir of the Reverend Baba Padmanji (1831–1906).<sup>41</sup> In his preface Padmanji lists as his source materials his memory, notes, diary, letters and correspondence, information obtained from friends, books, reports, and newspapers. He also clarifies his main objective: 'to describe the supreme compassion shown by God to a wretched sinner, so that other sinners can read about it and experience that compassion, and those who have already experienced it can sing its praises.'<sup>42</sup> The clear focus dictates the nature of the memoir as a Christian confession—an unfolding of events from the author's Hindu religious background, gradual interrogation of received beliefs, influence of Christian missionaries, actual high-profile conversion in 1854, subsequent rupture with his wife, and partial rapprochement with the rest of his family. As source material for the social and religious history of western India, the document is very valuable, considering that Padmanji's conversion was one of the

<sup>41</sup> Baba Padmanji, *Arunodaya* (Sunrise), 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, rpnt, Bombay: Bombay Tract and Book Society, 1963 (1884).

<sup>42</sup> Padmanji, 'Prastavana' (Preface), in *Arunodaya*, pp. 5–10 (p. 9), my translation.

most visible in the nineteenth century. In comparison, Dharmanand's 'conversion' to Buddhism and subsequent years of monkhood appear more muted, given that they happened far from western India and also given the general acceptance of Buddhism as being akin to Hinduism.

In view of the date of its initial serialization (1912–16), *Nivedan* can be counted among the earliest modern memoirs in Marathi. The first full-length autobiography was by the famous grammarian Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar, written in about 1868.<sup>43</sup> This was followed by the Padmanji memoir (1884), and by Ramabai Ranade's reminiscences of her married life (1910)—which read more like a biography of her illustrious husband, Justice M.G. Ranade.<sup>44</sup> Then comes *Nivedan*, just preceding D.K. Karve's autobiography (1915). The standard history of Marathi literature provides only a brief mention of *Nivedan*, dating its publication to 1924 (when it appeared as a complete book), while surprisingly also identifying it as a landmark text which marked the sole Marathi literary event of that year.<sup>45</sup>

Straddling as it does various genres, *Nivedan* remains a factual but highly readable narrative written with great precision and interspersed with quotations from Sanskrit literary works, Sanskrit and Pali Buddhist texts, and old Marathi devotional poetry. Its status as a model of Marathi prose was acknowledged long ago, when it was extracted in Marathi school textbooks.<sup>46</sup>



<sup>43</sup> Tarkhadkar's biography was published serially as late as in 1927, and in book form in 1947. R.S. Jog, 'Charitre, Itihas, ani Vangmaya-vichar', in *Marathi Vangmayacha Itihas* (A History of Marathi Literature), edited by R.S. Jog, Khanda 4 (1800–74), 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, rpnt, Pune: Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, 1999 (1965), pp. 540–87 (pp. 550–1).

<sup>44</sup> Ramabai Ranade, *Amachya Ayushyatil Kahi Athavani* (Reminiscences of Our Life), Mumbai: 1910. For a related discussion on women's autobiographical expression, see Meera Kosambi, *Crossing Thresholds: Feminist Essays in Social History*, Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007, pp. 33–9.

<sup>45</sup> G.M. Kulkarni, 'Atma-charitra', in *Marathi Vangmayacha Itihas*, Khanda 6, pt 1, pp. 525–44 (p. 531), p. 566.

<sup>46</sup> This information has been conveyed to me several times over the years, but at the moment I am unable to establish the exact period when the extracts appeared in the textbooks.



Dharmanand and Balabai with Manik (standing),  
Damodar, and Manorama, c. 1915

On returning to India from the USA in 1912, Dharmanand started teaching Pali at Fergusson College in Pune, having introduced the subject in the college curriculum; and continued for the next six years. (He had earlier introduced Pali into the curriculum of Bombay University, through Dr Bhandarkar, the vice chancellor.) He accepted the job despite a low salary (which smacked of double standards—as will be seen from Selection 2), in view of the tradition of self-sacrifice associated with the college's parent institution, the Deccan Education Society, which had been established in 1885 by a group of nationalists including B.G. Tilak and G.G. Agarkar. He received a warm welcome from the editor of *The Fergusson College Magazine* as a rare and 'profound Pali scholar' who had unlocked Buddhist literature, 'the great ambition of his life [being] to familiarize the people of Maharashtra

with that classical language and bring out editions of Pali works with vernacular translations for the benefit of the public.<sup>47</sup> Dharmanand also taught Pali at the Society's New English School, and to MA students, some of whom later made illustrious careers.<sup>48</sup> On his recommendation, Sayajirao Gaikwad instituted four scholarships for students of Pali at Pune.

During this time Dharmanand published *Buddha-lila-sara-sangraha* (A Collection of the Deeds of the Buddha, 1914) in three parts, dealing with tales related to various Bodhisattvas, the Buddha's life, and his teachings.<sup>49</sup> This, his second book on Buddhism (and more than 300 pages in length), differs from the first and indeed from all his others on the subject in that it does not purport to be a historically authentic account, but presents a number of stories—including legends about Bodhisattva's rebirths—from the *Tripitaka* and Buddha-ghoshacharya's *Atthakathas* (Artha-kathas, or clarifications along with stories) related to the *Tripitaka*. The book is intended to give the reader a taste of Pali literature. In his foreword to it R.G. Bhandarkar stresses the value of this book by 'Pandit Kosambi' because even legends about the founder of a religion shed light on the belief structure of its followers—as long as they are not accepted as historically true.<sup>50</sup> This book was followed in 1917 by the slim *Laghu-patha*, a selection of Buddhist sutras with a Marathi translation.

A second invitation to Harvard came in October 1918, to continue the work of editing *Visuddhi-magga*. This time Dharmanand took

<sup>47</sup> V.G. Kale, 'Editorial Notes', *The Fergusson College Magazine*, vol. III, no. 1, April 1912, pp. 36–40 (p. 36).

<sup>48</sup> Dharmanand suggested the name of P.V. Bapat to succeed him at Fergusson College, and later to go to Harvard to translate *Visuddhi-magga*, where Bapat did his PhD. N.K. Bhagwat taught Pali at St Xavier's College, Mumbai, for many years. C.V. Rajwade and C.V. Joshi (popularly known as a humorous writer in Marathi) were renowned teachers of Pali at Baroda.

<sup>49</sup> Dharmanand Kosambi, *Buddha-lila-sara-sangraha* (A Collection of the Deeds of the Buddha), Mumbai: Manoranjan Grantha-prasarak Mandal, 1914. A selection from the first two parts was published as *Buddha-lila: 1*, Mumbai: Dhavale Popular, 1958. It has not been possible to establish whether Part 2 was also published.

<sup>50</sup> R.G. Bhandarkar, 'Abhipraya', in *ibid.*, pp. 4–5.



Dharmanand with Manik and Damodar, c. 1918

along his two oldest children.<sup>51</sup> The nineteen-year-old Manik was enrolled in Radcliffe College, established for women; she returned to India with her father four years later, after graduating. The eleven-year-old Damodar went to school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and then to Harvard College on a scholarship; he returned after graduating with distinction in 1929. (Dharmanand seems to have been closest to these two children even in later life.) During this time Dharmanand worked very hard despite his debilitating diabetes (it is unclear when it was first detected), and also audited a course in Russian offered by his friend and colleague, Professor Leo Wiener. He mastered Russian well enough to read simple books in Russian and translated Tolstoy's *Ivan the Fool* into Marathi as *Veda Ivan* in 1938.

Upon his return to India in August 1922 Dharmanand was drawn directly into the nationalist struggle and Mahatma Gandhi's orbit. Through Acharya Kripalani he had met Gandhiji in 1916, during the

<sup>51</sup> On this trip the Kosambis escorted Parvatibai Athavale, who wanted to go to the USA to study English and collect money for Karve's institutions for women—as Pandita Ramabai had done. She shared a cabin with Manik. Parvatibai Athavale, *Majhi Kahani* (My Story), Hingane: Anatha-balikashram, 1928, p. 47.



Dharmanand in the USA, c. 1919

latter's visit to Pune. In November 1922 Gandhiji invited Dharmanand to join the faculty of the oriental languages section, known as Puratattva Mandir, in his Gujarat Vidyapeeth, through Muni Jinavijayaji who was a scholar of Jain Studies. Dharmanand refused an offer to serve as principal of the section but taught Pali there for three years and wrote copiously. *Nivedan* was published as a book in 1924, as were *Jataka-katha* (Jataka Tales, 1924), *Samadhi-marga* (The Path of Samadhi, 1925), and *Bauddha Sanghacha Parichaya* (An Introduction to the Buddhist Sangha, 1926). These were also published in Gujarati translation; *Buddha-charita* (The Life of the Buddha) was published only in Gujarati.

In 1924–5 Dharmanand published a series of seven Marathi articles under the common title 'Buddha-charitra' (The Life of the Buddha) in *Vividha Jnana Vistara*. The article rubrics may be translated as 'Contemporary Political Conditions' (July 1924), 'Bodhisattva Gautam' (August 1924), 'Bodhisattva's Austerities' (November 1924), 'The Path to Enlightenment' (February 1925), 'The Sangha' (May 1925),

'Sacrifices and Rituals' (August 1925), and 'Caste Distinctions' (December 1925).

Around 1924 Dharmanand tried to open a school for girls in Goa, offering to contribute part of the expenses, provided the other part was collected in Goa. He even received promises of help from American friends. But for some reason the scheme came to nothing.



Dharmanand, c. 1924

Of the above books, *Samadhi-marga* (The Path of Meditation or Concentration) is an informative text about the purpose of samadhi, factors that promote or prevent successful samadhi, etc., sprinkled with relevant anecdotes from Buddhist literature.<sup>52</sup> Having worked extensively on editing the text of *Visuddhimagga*, Dharmanand was tempted to present to Marathi readers its gist insofar as it concerned samadhi. But the topic posed a dilemma, as Dharmanand explains in his preface. Even while he saw the urgent need to introduce the

<sup>52</sup> Dharmanand Kosambi, *Samadhi-marga*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Mudranalaya, 1925.

common man to this means of obtaining peace in a world increasingly caught up in a feverish whirl of activity—from various types of entertainment to diverse expressions of nationalism—he doubted whether it was within the latter's intellectual and philosophical grasp. Finally, he was encouraged by the example of the renowned Gandhian Kishorilal Mashruwala, who had lived for several months in solitude before rejoining Gujarat Vidyapeeth as its principal and resuming his work for the education and enlightenment of the common man. It was to Mashruwala that Dharmanand dedicated the book as a token of his admiration.<sup>53</sup>

*Buddha Sanghacha Parichaya* (An Introduction to the Buddhist Sangha, 1926) was written for Dharmanand's good friend, the Gandhian D.B., alias Kakasaheb, Kalelkar, to whom it is dedicated.<sup>54</sup> Kalelkar was jailed for a year in early 1923 and had asked Dharmanand for a translation of the Buddhist text *Vinaya Pitaka*. But the only available English translation in the Oxford University Press 'Sacred Books of the East' series was out of print. So Dharmanand thought of preparing the gist of the five books that comprise this Buddhist work, which would also be of interest to other readers. He also added short descriptions of the famous monks and nuns, and male and female lay followers, who were the Buddha's contemporaries, calling it an introduction to the Buddhist Sangha, rather than '*Vinaya Pitaka*'.<sup>55</sup> Part I discusses the rules recommended by the Buddha for the Sangha and contextualizes them with anecdotes about the occasions and reasons for which they were made. Part II, similarly, discusses prohibitions; and Part III provides life-sketches of renowned monks, nuns, etc. (among whom two monks from the oppressed castes—today's Dalits—are especially included). The preface also discusses the historicity of *Vinaya Pitaka*.



On his third visit to the USA, in January 1926 Dharmanand finally completed his work on *Visuddhi-magga* to his satisfaction and prepared

<sup>53</sup> Kosambi, 'Prastavana' (Preface), in *Samadhi-marga*, pp. 1–6.

<sup>54</sup> Dharmanand Kosambi, *Buddha Sanghacha Parichaya* (An Introduction to the Buddhist Sangha), Mumbai: Mangesh Narayan Kulkarni, 1926.

<sup>55</sup> Kosambi, 'Prastavana', in *ibid.*, pp. 1–6 (p. 1).

it for publication with an editorial preface, although its actual publication in the Harvard Oriental Series was delayed until 1950, for reasons unknown. In September 1927 Dharmanand returned to India. Later, he accompanied Balabai on a long tour of various places within the country, which included Hindu and Buddhist holy sites. He then spent a few months at Gujarat Vidyapeeth at his own expense and wrote a summary of fifty sutras of *Majjhima Nikaya* and a Marathi translation of *Sutta Nipata*. *Majjhima Nikaya* is one of the five major divisions of *Sutta Pitaka*, one of the three divisions of the Pali canon known as the *Tripitaka*, which sheds light on the Buddha's religion in the form of discourses, narratives, and dialogues, in prose and verse. *Sutta Nipata* is another sub-division of *Sutta Pitaka*.<sup>56</sup> Incidentally, a Pali *sutta* is an explanation of a point related to the Dhamma; it may be of any length and presented as a discourse or dialogue.

In August 1928 Dharmanand's interest was awakened by Jawaharlal Nehru's article in *Young India* about Russia and the proposed institute for the study of Buddhist culture to be established by the Leningrad Academy of Sciences. This apparently contradictory Bolshevik interest in religion prompted Dharmanand to write to his Russian acquaintances, such as Professor Shebotsky, who had been a fellow student of Dr Woods and Dr V.A. Sukhtankar at Bonn University. The result was an invitation to visit Leningrad, where he was appointed professor of Pali, both at the new institute and at Leningrad University. He utilized part of his salary towards travelling extensively within Russia to study the new social system.

In early 1930 Dharmanand returned to India and threw himself into Gandhiji's movement. In April he accompanied V.R. Shinde and others on their walking tour of twenty-six villages and small towns in Pune district to popularize the salt satyagraha. He himself was to lead the salt satyagraha in the coastal village of Shirole near Goa in May. Subsequently he lived in the satyagraha camp at Vile Parle, a suburb of Mumbai, and helped to run a class for young volunteers, discussing the lessons to be learnt from the Russian Revolution. He also propagated

<sup>56</sup> See Appendix IV of 'The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha' in this volume. For an overview of Buddhist literature, see Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, vol. II, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983 (1933).

the ideology of satyagraha among workers in Mumbai's mill area of Parel; the workers also participated in a peaceful satyagraha. Later in 1930 Dharmanand was required to take charge of the Vile Parle camp and was arrested along with other satyagraha leaders in October 1930, under a special ordinance. (He is believed to have received a rather severe punishment because of his work among the mill workers.) The ordinance was revoked when the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed, and all the prisoners arrested under it were released in March 1931. (Dharmanand's account of both these events is included in Selection 2.)

Later that year Dharmanand paid his fourth and last visit to the USA at the urging of Dr Woods (who had earlier sent Manik money to ensure her father's comfort in jail), and returned the following year, via Russia, where he met his old friends.

Dharmanand then spent some time visiting his son D.D., who taught mathematics at Fergusson College in Pune, where he had settled with his wife Nalini, daughter of Dharmanand's old friend B.R. Madgaonkar. (The marriage had been arranged by the two fathers in 1931.) In 1934–5 Dharmanand spent more than a year at Kashi, as a guest first at Benares Hindu University and then at Kashi Vidyapeeth. At the latter place he wrote *Hindi Sanskriti ani Ahinsa* (Indian Civilization and Non-violence, 1935. Part V of this book is included in translation in the present volume.)

A concrete form of Dharmanand's effort to spread the knowledge of Buddhism was the long-cherished task of building a Buddhist vihara in the mill area of Parel in Mumbai. It was named 'Bahujan Vihara'—rather than Buddha Vihara—because of its focus on mill workers and Dharmanand's experiment to eradicate caste discrimination and untouchability among them. He enlisted the help of the philanthropist Shet Jugal Kishore Birla, who had already built Buddhist temples and rest-houses at places such as Sarnath, Kushinara, Calcutta, and Darjeeling. The building was completed in 1936 and the plaque near the entrance mentioned Birla's donations and other contributions; Dharmanand's name is nowhere to be found. He stayed here until the end of 1939, working in various ways: he gave discourses every Sunday, and taught Pali and Buddhism—taking pride in the fact that he taught Pali to a Dalit student (of Mahar descent) who had passed his BA in Sanskrit and was now studying for his MA. After totally devoting

himself to the vihara, he suddenly dissociated himself from it when he discovered that Birla, whose generosity continued to support the vihara, had not liked some of the thoughts he had presented in *Hindi Sanskriti ani Ahinsa*. The dissociation provides one more instance of his iron resolve, for it happened despite Birla's and Gandhiji's requests to him to stay on.



*Hindi Sanskriti ani Ahinsa* was the culmination of Dharmanand's cogitations for about five years. He explains his objective in a preface:

Lord Buddha has compared the mind of the average man to an untended *shala* forest. The Lord says, 'O monks, suppose there is a forest of *shala* trees near a village or a city, which is covered with *eranda* [castor-oil] trees.<sup>57</sup> If someone wishes to improve and develop it, he will remove the crooked and harmful trees, clear the forest, and allow the straight *shala* saplings to grow. Similarly, O monks, discard unmeritorious thoughts and exert yourselves to develop meritorious thoughts. This will lead to your advancement.'<sup>58</sup>

The metaphor is applied to Indian civilization, from which later accretions need to be removed to facilitate the growth of good beliefs and practices.

The book—published by himself in a print run of 1000 copies—is an ambitious overview of Indian civilization from Vedic times, contextualized in terms of Western civilization from Babylonia to ancient Greece and Rome, and further up to the British empire. The telescopic and fast-paced narrative is as dazzling in its uncalculated and spontaneous display of scholarship as it is in its uncompromising argument. The five parts are entitled 'The Vedic Civilization', 'The Shramana Civilization', 'The Puranic Civilization', 'Western

<sup>57</sup> *Shala* (*Shorea robusta*) is a large tree somewhat akin to teak. Castor-oil trees grow tall and proliferate easily but are considered to be of little worth.

<sup>58</sup> Dharmanand Kosambi, 'Prastavana' (Preface), in *Hindi Sanskriti ani Ahinsa* (Indian Civilization and Non-Violence), Mumbai: Dharmanand Kosambi, 1935, pp. 1–2 (p. 1), my translation.

Civilization', and 'Civilization and Non-Violence'. The book traverses a wide terrain. It starts with ancient India and the rise of the *shramana* cultures, including Jainism and Buddhism. It traces their fall—because of their increasing dependence on royal patronage and because of the opposition mounted by Brahmins, to whose culture of religious ritual they had offered a more popular, ethical alternative. It gives a partial analysis of Vedic and Puranic literature; it then turns to the rise and fall of Babylonian and Sumerian cultures and their interaction with India, and the rise of Greece and the entire Western civilization based on it. Coming to more recent history, the book considers the entry of the West into India through trade, resulting later in colonial rule; the growth of nationalism in the West; the Russian Revolution; and the rise of Japan as a world power. Then it turns to the nationalist struggle in India, including Gandhiji's movement and the young socialists within the Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Dharmanand also sums up here the political choices available to young and impatient Indian nationalists in 1935:

The Hindu middle class in India is hungry for independence. It wants independence—either through non-violence or violence. An ailing man does not bother to see whether a medicine contains the pure [essence of] plants or impure essence of meat and such things. What he wants is good health, and the sooner he attains it the better. The medicines of the Arya Samaj, Lokamanya [Tilak's] Ganesh festival, and Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent and constructive programme have been tried, but have not brought the cure. It is then quite natural for eager young minds to turn to the Bolshevik medicine. The Bolsheviks have freed the entire working class in the Russian empire by destroying the aristocrats and zamindars, and by fighting the whole world [in the process]. Why then should we not be able to free this long-suffering country of India by following the same path?<sup>59</sup>

The fifth and last part of the book, 'Civilization and Non-Violence' (included in translation in the present volume), is an attempt to meld the Buddha's doctrine of non-violence and avoidance of possessions with the ideology of satyagraha promoted by Gandhiji, and both these

<sup>59</sup> Kosambi, *Hindi Sanskriti*, p. 277, my translation.



in turn with Marx's thought. Dharmanand thus presents a new and eclectic political doctrine as the only viable ideology for India, and for the achievement of universal peace. Being an independent thinker rather than a political leader, he arrogates the freedom to present an agenda for India after independence, which includes a socialist policy and the liquidation of princely states—which Gandhiji was unwilling to specify for fear of alienating a section of his followers during the nationalist struggle, but which became a reality fifteen years after Dharmanand had penned the words.

An unexpected element in this text is also Dharmanand's articulation of a strong feminism—this for the first time in the intellectual and social reformist discourse, which had rested at best on a sympathetic but conspicuously patronizing attitude towards women.

The breathtakingly wide canvas of the book received acclaim. In P.M. Lad's words: "This kind of fundamental discussion—taking such a wide-ranging overview of Indian civilization from its inception and linking Indian civilization to world civilization—would be hard to find not only in Marathi but even in other languages. This book is a mine of diamonds in the form of diverse ideas and theses in their original form."<sup>60</sup>

Soon after, Dharmanand wrote a Marathi article translatable as "The Fundamental Tenets of Buddhism: Have They been Absorbed into Hindu Society?" (1937). This was his response to an idea articulated by Babu Rajendra Prasad in an interview. Expressing surprise at the total disappearance of Buddhism from India (leaving aside a few ancient ruins), Rajendra Prasad had claimed that Buddhism had probably also vanished from Indian society because its basic tenets had percolated into Hindu society, leaving Buddhism bereft of its separate identity.<sup>61</sup> Dharmanand respectfully disproved this thesis by emphasizing that the basic tenets of Buddhism were non-violence and the elimination of suffering; these had not percolated into Hinduism,

<sup>60</sup> Lad, 'Dharmanand', p. 22, my translation.

<sup>61</sup> Dharmanand Kosambi, 'Bauddha Dharmachi Mulatattve Hindu Samaj Avataraali Kaya?' (The Fundamental Tenets of Buddhism: Have They been Absorbed into Hindu Society?), *Vividha Jnana Vistara*, February–March 1937, pp. 57–62.

which retained violence as a crucial element. He had made the argument before, but his words now acquired a noticeably sharper edge.

About this time Dharmanand also wrote a series of partly autobiographical articles under the rubric *Khulasa* (A Clarification, 1937–8) which were serialized in a Marathi weekly of Mumbai entitled *Prakash*. (Excerpts from these are included as Selection 2.) These are now available only in fragments and seem to contain a more mature perspective as well as a more consistent commentary on society and politics than *Nivedan*. Unfortunately the complete original text is nowhere available; Dharmanand's account of the USA and Russia under contrasting political systems (mentioned in passing in his biography by Sukhathankar) would have been most interesting.

In April 1940 Dharmanand paid his fourth and final visit to Burma. He went to Rangoon to trace a specific commentary on *Visuddhimagga*; the manuscript was traced after his departure in response to a newspaper advertisement by a Burmese senator and conveyed to him in India.<sup>62</sup> The same year he finally completed and published his Devanagari edition of *Visuddhi-magga*,<sup>63</sup> in 1943 he published an index to the text with alternative readings, as a companion volume.

Dharmanand's best-known book, *Bhagavan Buddha*, was published in two parts in 1940–1 with the objective of reconstructing a reliable account of the Buddha's life on the basis of the oldest Buddhist texts.<sup>64</sup> Part I includes six chapters translatable as 'The Aryan Victory', 'Contemporary Political Conditions', 'Contemporary Religious Conditions', 'Gotama Bodhisattva', 'Austerities and Enlightenment', and 'The Sangha'. The next six chapters, in Part II, are: 'Belief in the Soul', 'Karma-yoga', 'Sacrifices and Rites', 'Caste Distinctions', 'Non-vegetarianism', and 'Daily Routine'. As significant as the book is its sixteen-page preface, which is a scholarly essay discussing the reliability of the classical Buddhist texts as the authentic voice of Buddhism and as

<sup>62</sup> Dharmananda [sic] Kosambi, 'Preface' in *Visuddhimagga*, Part II: The Index of the *Visuddhimagga*, Sarnath, Benares, Maha Bodhi Society, 1943, pp. 5–6 (p. 5).

<sup>63</sup> Kosambi, *Visuddhimagga*, Part I.

<sup>64</sup> Dharmanand Kosambi, *Bhagavan Buddha* (*Purvardha*) and (*Uttarardha*), Nagpur and Pune: Suvichar Prakashan Mandal, 1940 and 1941.

source materials for the Buddha's life—as distinct from later insertions, distortions, and embellishments. It also addresses certain vexed issues integral to the discourse on Buddhism, as for example the dating of the Buddha's life (as 623 BC to 543 BC, according to the author); the charge that the Buddhist stress on non-violence was responsible for the general vulnerability of Indians to foreign subjugation (which the author disproves by citing examples of martial and staunchly orthodox Hindu rulers, such as the Rajput kings and the Peshwas, who ultimately succumbed to foreign attacks); and the dating of the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* to post-Buddha times (which the author substantiates). Dharmanand stresses the book's utility for historical research, expresses doubts about it receiving a generally positive response because it was not written in order to gain popularity but to establish the truth, and hopes it will be appreciated by 'the many Maharashtrian readers who think objectively about ancient history.'<sup>65</sup> (Interestingly, Dharmanand suggests here that readers unable to access Buddhist texts in the original or in translation should read his five books, which he obviously regarded as his most important contribution: *Buddha*, *Dharma ani Sangha*, *Buddha-lila-sara-sangraha*, *Bauddha Sanghacha Parichaya*, *Samadhi-marga*, and *Hindi Sanskriti ani Ahinsa*.<sup>66</sup>)

With ample textual substantiation Dharmanand narrates the salient features of the Buddha's life—first that his name was Gautama and that he was never named Siddhartha;<sup>67</sup> then that he was the son of a wealthy Shakya landowner dependent on agriculture, but not a king or emperor; that the story of his having lived in three lavish palaces during the three seasons was a myth (although Dharmanand had earlier believed it to be true); that he practised samadhi since childhood; and that the reason for his renunciation was not the improbable incident of seeing an old man, a diseased man, and a corpse for the first time in his late twenties, but his distaste for violent quarrels such as

<sup>65</sup> Kosambi, 'Prastavana' (Preface), in *Bhagavan Buddha* (Purvardha), pp. 1–16 (p. 16).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Gautama (Gotama in Pali) was the Buddha's real name. The later Buddhist texts mention 'Sarvartha-siddha' or 'Siddhartha' as his names: these are imaginary. Kosambi, *Bhagavan Buddha*, I, p. 97.

those erupting between the Shakyas and the neighbouring Koliyas over the water of the Rohini river (although a general awareness of the frailty of life was also a contributory cause).

An unexpected fallout of the chapter on non-vegetarianism—and the well-substantiated fact that both the Buddha and Mahavir ate meat, fish, and fowl because of their general prevalence in the diet of the people from whom they begged food—was a resurrection of an old controversy. One of Dharmanand's articles in 1925 had cited a couple of extracts about Mahavir—pointed out to him by renowned Jain scholars and corroborated by an elderly Jain sadhu—in this context, and caused a minor storm of Jain protest in Ahmedabad.<sup>68</sup> This chapter of the new book led in Vidarbha to fresh protests which Dharmanand laid to rest with a response published in a Nagpur weekly. But in 1944 the orthodox Jain community, 'from Calcutta to Kathiawar', held meetings and passed resolutions condemning him. As he puts it wryly, the only consolation was the resultant, though temporary, union of Jain sadhus and householders across sectarian boundaries. Dharmanand's reply in a Gujarati daily was to suggest that the Jain community should select a Gujarati judge as an arbitrator before whom both parties would depose. If he lost, Dharmanand would tender the community a public apology; if the community lost, the matter would be publicized in newspapers to put a permanent end to the controversy. The Jains did not accept the proposal and the movement died down, but occasional protests continued.<sup>69</sup>

*Bhagavan Buddha* is generally regarded as the most authoritative historical documentation of the life and times of the Buddha. According to J.S. Sukhathankar, Dharmanand's biographer, it was translated by the Sahitya Akademi into thirteen Indian languages years later (these did not include English) in 1956, and the Hindi translation was presented to the president of India on the Buddha's 2500<sup>th</sup> death anniversary on 22 May 1956. The Venerable Anand Kausalyayan, who had studied Pali under Dharmanand at Sarnath, translated the book into

<sup>68</sup> Kosambi, *Bhagavan Buddha*, II, pp. 99–101.

<sup>69</sup> Dharmanand Kosambi, 'Prastavana' (Preface), in *Parshwanathacaha Chaaturyaama Dharma* (Parshwanath's Doctrine of the Four Conquests), Mumbai: Dharmanand Smarak Trust, 1949, pp. 16–18 (p. 17).

Sinhalese and published it in Sri Lanka.<sup>70</sup> Sukhathankar believes that it was also regarded as the standard book on Buddhism by Dr B.R. Ambedkar who converted to Buddhism in Nagpur, along with two lakh followers, on 14 October 1956.<sup>71</sup>

Dharmanand's penultimate book (with a preface dated 1945), published posthumously in 1949 by the Dharmanand Smarak Trust, was a play entitled *Bodhisattva: Natak*. That a serious and meticulous researcher should write a play came as a surprise to many. Kakasaheb Kalelkar comments on this in his foreword:

No one would ever have dreamt that Shri Dharmanand Kosambi—whose life was guided by motives of a search for religion, thirst for knowledge, and teaching—would write a play. But what could he do? All his life he spoke and wrote not a sentence without strong historical evidence. A new and logical interpretation of Gautama Buddha's renunciation of his home and initiation occurred to him; but even after obtaining enough evidence to suggest that this interpretation rang true, he had a nagging feeling it was insufficient. So what could he do? Finally he contented himself by presenting his interpretation in the form of a play.<sup>72</sup>

The heart of the matter, according to Kalelkar, is that the Buddha's subsequent philosophical search and discovery were related to the alleviation not merely of physical suffering but also of social ailments.

The prevalent and popular depiction of Gautama's life projects him improbably as a prince sheltered from the simple problems of life, such as illness, old age, and death. As a young man in his late twenties, with a wife and son, he discovered these three aspects of the human condition, immediately lost his attachment to worldly life, and became a

<sup>70</sup> Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, p. 326.

<sup>71</sup> However, Ambedkar himself has not mentioned Kosambi in his *The Buddha and His Dhamma* (Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, vol. 11), Bombay: Government of Maharashtra, Education Department, 1992) or in any of his other writings. In fact, he has not mentioned any secondary source on Buddhism, as will be discussed below.

<sup>72</sup> Kakasaheb Kalelkar, 'Sayuktik Upapatti' (A Logical Interpretation), in D. Kosambi, *Bodhisattva (Natak)*, Mumbai: Dharmanand Smarak Trust, 1949, pp. 5–8 (p. 5), my translation.

renunciant. Dharmanand provides an alternative interpretation on the basis of a large number of Buddhist texts which are cited in his preface. His *Bodhisattva*—or 'Gautama', before he became the Buddha on attaining enlightenment—displays a philosophical bent of mind and belief in non-violence since childhood. He renounces his home as a self-imposed exile mainly for political reasons, studies various religious doctrines, practises austerities, and finally discovers the Middle Path to end all suffering. The play ends with *Bodhisattva* emerging both victorious and enlightened—at the very moment that he ceases to be *Bodhisattva* and becomes the Buddha. A technical innovation in the play is the deployment of a *sutradhar* not only to perform the traditional task of introducing the play but also to fill in the audience with recent happenings at various stages in order to ensure narrative continuity.

To free the figure of Gautama from a web of magic and legend, and to construct a living being with a believable spiritual progression is the objective of the play, and in this Dharmanand succeeds. As Kalelkar says, the play provides a logical interpretation of Gautama's life: 'One is prompted to say that, whatever the reason for Gautama's renunciation, it is only after [reading] the interpretation presented in the play that one is able to imbibe the Buddha's teaching really well.'<sup>73</sup>

This is also the reading of Gautama's personality that Dr B.R. Ambedkar accepts in his well-known book, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. Ambedkar does not mention Dharmanand, or indeed any other source from which he derived his information or ideas. According to Raosaheb Kasbe, possibly the foremost Ambedkarite scholar and social-political thinker, this could be because the book was first published posthumously in 1957 by the People's Education Society of Mumbai, and part of the Introduction, including the acknowledgements, was omitted—a move that has been regarded as controversial.<sup>74</sup> Kasbe believes that a reference to Dharmanand was—or definitely should have been—included there. A list of the sources for this book, compiled by Vasant Moon, another renowned Ambedkarite scholar, serves as a supplement to the volume and includes numerous references

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 6, my translation.

<sup>74</sup> Personal Communication from Dr Raosaheb Kasbe, Pune, 31 July 2009.

to Dharmanand's *Bodhisattva*, but only relating to Gautama's life and not to his religious teaching.<sup>75</sup> Kasbe claims that there are several other identifiable instances in the book where material has been derived from Dharmanand's *Bhagavan Buddha*.

The reason for Gautama's renunciation forms one of the core concerns of Ambedkar's book, as set out in its introduction.<sup>76</sup> Here, Dharmanand's influence is evident, as already mentioned. The second core problem is the 'Four Aryan Truths' centring on suffering, which 'cuts at the root of Buddhism'. The emphasis on sorrow 'makes the gospel of the Buddha a gospel of pessimism', and Ambedkar treats it as not a part of the original doctrine but 'a later accretion by monks'. However, as Mahesh Deokar, an Ambedkarite scholar and professor of Pali, points out, Ambedkar does refer repeatedly in the body of the book to the inherence of suffering in human existence; his objective is not to deny the fact of pervasive suffering but to deny it the status of an eternal truth.<sup>77</sup> The third core problem is the Buddha's denial of the existence of the soul but affirmation of the doctrine of karma and rebirth. Ambedkar's answer seems to be that the Buddha used these words in a sense different from his contemporary Brahmins. (Again, given Ambedkar's rationalist approach, it seems surprising that he introduces Gautama's ten previous incarnations as Bodhisattva into the book; Deokar explains this as an attempt to introduce the factor of moral evolution.) The fourth and last problem relates to the function of the Buddhist monk, which Ambedkar sees as that of 'a social servant devoting his life to [the] service of the people and being their friend, guide and philosopher' rather than being the 'perfect man'.

While reviving Buddhism, Ambedkar also reinterpreted it under the label of 'Navayana' or neo-Buddhism (literally, the New Vehicle), in contrast with the existing and ancient schools of Hinayan and Mahayan (the Lesser and Greater Vehicle, respectively), as Pradeep

<sup>75</sup> Vasant Moon, *Pali and Other Sources of The Buddha and His Dhamma with an Index* (Supplement to vol. 11 of *Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*), Bombay: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1995. I am grateful to Dr Pradeep Gokhale for this reference.

<sup>76</sup> Ambedkar, 'Introduction', in *The Buddha*, 3 unnumbered pages.

<sup>77</sup> Personal communication from Dr Mahesh Deokar, Pune, 29 July 2009.

Gokhale points out.<sup>78</sup> Ambedkar also deployed it consciously as a tool for economic and socio-political restructuring, because 'The purpose of Religion is to explain the origin of the world. The purpose of Dhamma is to reconstruct it.'<sup>79</sup> Actually, Dharmanand's efforts lay in precisely the same direction, but it is of course possible that Ambedkar did not see Dharmanand's pre-1940 writings.

Dharmanand's last and posthumously published book, *Parshwanathacha Chaaturyaama Dharma* (Parshwanath's Doctrine of the Four Conquests, written in June 1946), tries to trace the life and teaching of this historical figure. Parshwanath was the twenty-third of the Jain Tirthankars (prophets), just preceding the last and twenty-fourth—Vardhaman, also known as Mahavir, who was the Buddha's contemporary.<sup>80</sup> The Four Conquests—Non-violence, Truth, Not Stealing, and Avoidance of Possessions—were promoted systematically and widely by Parshwanath, and were incorporated by later religions in India and outside. In this last work Dharmanand also reiterates two of his earlier themes: the salience of socialist ideology, and the divisiveness of both nationalism and religious affiliation for international fraternity and world peace. Religious history and political developments are conflated, as here in the conclusion:

The doctrine of the Four Conquests originated in the doctrine of non-violence preached by the ancient sages, and was popularized by Parshwanath. The Buddha developed it further by combining it with samadhi and true wisdom. Christ propagated the same doctrine in the West with the help of the Jews and their Jehovah, Mahatma Tolstoy clearly showed how it can be combined with physical labour and made influential also in the political sphere in the form of satyagraha, and Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated its success through direct experiments.

<sup>78</sup> Pradeep Gokhale, 'Dr Ambedkar's Interpretation of Buddhism', in *The Philosophy of Dr B.R. Ambedkar*, edited by Pradeep Gokhale, Pune: Sugava Prakashan, 2008, pp. 109–52 (pp. 109, 135).

<sup>79</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>80</sup> For general information about Jainism, see Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Jainism: An Indian Religion of Salvation*, trans. Shridhar Shrotri, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999 (1925). This book, however, contains scant mention of Parshwanath.

Thus Parshwanath, the Buddha, Christ, Tolstoy, and Gandhi have shown the way to the doctrine of the Four Conquests. Their efforts cannot be said to have succeeded completely. There are very large numbers among Jains, Buddhists, and Christians who believe in violence; and it is impossible to make them understand their own religious doctrine. But there is no reason to despair, because I believe implicitly that many leaders will emerge in the future to develop the doctrine of the Four Conquests in various ways. Let me take leave of my readers with the prayer that such leaders be born frequently, and that their good actions uplift all of human society.<sup>81</sup>



In the 1930s and 1940s Dharmanand travelled throughout the subcontinent and beyond, but also spent time visiting his wife and children—who were by this time settled in different parts of the country—and occasionally rendered them practical help. For example, he had bought D.D. a plot of land near the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, and in the mid-1930s he spent time supervising a house constructed there, designed by D.D. on the Goan model and financed by B.R. Madgaonkar. Ten years later, we find him helping out Manik's husband, Dr Ram Prasad, who had accepted a post-retirement job in Mumbai and was looking for suitable accommodation; Dharmanand stayed with his son-in-law until Manik joined him. (Earlier the couple had lived in Bangalore, along with Balabai.) About this time he also visited his second daughter, Manorama Sathe, and her family in Indore. Only Kamala was outside his orbit, for she was then studying and later working in the USA. But Dharmanand was not a constant presence in his wife's or children's life. The reason for his constant travels was perhaps that he did not possess a dwelling of any sort and had also given his share of the inherited property in Goa to his brother, as part of his ideology of avoiding possessions.

His teaching and research continued in various parts of India. In Mumbai he helped P.M. Lad's translation of *Dhammapada*. At Sarnath he was much sought after by students: for example, he taught some Chinese students Sanskrit and Pali, and checked the translation of *Sutta Nipata* by an Englishwoman.

<sup>81</sup> Kosambi, *Parshwanathacaha*, p. 99, my translation.

By 1945 he was close to seventy and weary of life—ill health in the form of extreme diabetes had sapped his energy and caused a constant itch all over his body. He despaired of doing further substantial work, felt that he had lived out his life, and longed for peace. His desire for solitude had reached the point where he was even willing to give up his collection of precious books, such as the *Tripitaka*; he wrote to a friend saying his 'attachment to books was decreasing'.<sup>82</sup> A desire to end his life was taking strong root.

At the end of *Parshwanath's Doctrine of the Four Conquests*, Dharmanand had dwelt at length on the Jain practice of '*sallekhanā*', or discarding the body by fasting unto death, which Parshwanath had recommended in certain cases and was believed to have practised himself. Dharmanand had supported it as a religious observance (*vrata*) which, if properly followed, would lead to both individual and social good.

If it becomes common practice to follow this observance [of *sallekhanā*] to obtain release from incurable diseases and old age, it would spare society a great loss. Society spends a great deal of money today on the rich and poor who suffer from such diseases. It cannot kill off these people and is compelled to allow the suffering of the rich to continue in their homes, and the suffering of the poor in hospitals . . . If such diseased and extremely aged people voluntarily accepted the observance of fasting, it would undoubtedly lighten the burden on society.<sup>83</sup>

This is what Dharmanand himself opted for—before this book could be published—and his observation resonates with the worldwide debate over euthanasia today.

It was in this frame of mind that, in 1945, he accepted the post of honorary professor of Pali at the Vernacular Society of Ahmedabad, which coached MA students in Sanskrit and the Prakrit languages and helped PhD students. His hidden agenda was to end his life there by fasting unto death, Gujaratis being more amenable to this Jain manner of ending life. All the same, death by this method was considered rare and sacred, and attracted a great deal of publicity—which Dharmanand had always shunned.

<sup>82</sup> Cited in Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, p. 317, my translation.

<sup>83</sup> Kosambi, *Parshwanathacaha*, p. 98, my translation.

The following year, he went to the Gandhi ashram near Gorakhpur in the North and began his fast. The superintendent of the ashram, Raghavdas, was alarmed and immediately informed Gandhiji, Mashruwala, and others by telegram; return telegrams came from them requesting Dharmanand to desist. In response to Gandhiji's repeated telegrams, Dharmanand gave up his fast, went to the Sevagram ashram at Vardha, and underwent medical treatment, but without success. His health had already deteriorated and he could digest nothing; so his physical suffering increased considerably. But all he said to Balvantsinha, who was deputed to look after him, was that he was 'glad that through Bapu's kindness I had this opportunity of testing my endurance. It has been a severe trial, but I think I have stood it well.'<sup>84</sup> He lived on for a while on a reduced diet, as advised by Vinoba Bhawe. But on 4 May 1947 he stopped eating altogether and prepared to die, leaving instructions that his children were not to visit him—lest it disturb his peace of mind. This time, Gandhiji did not protest.

Dharmanand remained mentally alert for a full month thereafter. He had recently had to accept Rs 1000 from Kamalnayan Bajaj, much against his will, and wrote to Gandhiji with the request that the money be used for sending a few students to Sri Lanka to study Pali. Gandhiji replied that while Sri Lanka might be the best place for studying Pali, it was not ideal for studying Buddhism. Agreeing with Gandhiji's assessment, Dharmanand repeated the request in a letter dated 25 May 1947, but significantly made no mention of his health. A couple of days later, Kishorilal Mashruwala expressed regret in his letter to Balvantsinha at not being able to rush to Sevagram to meet 'Kosambiji' who had 'placed before us the choicest gems from a vast treasure [of Buddhism]. He is a saint, and when I say that, I am not using the term [as a figure of speech] . . . but am merely stating a fact.' Dharmanand dictated a reply to the effect that Kishorilal need not grieve: 'After all, we are one in spirit and are therefore ever united.'<sup>85</sup>

On 22 May, after three weeks of fasting, he was carried on a stretcher to inaugurate a newly dug well at the ashram. It was named 'Kosambi

<sup>84</sup> Balvantsinha, 'Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi', in *Under the Shelter of Bapu*, trans. (from the Hindi by) Gopalrao Kulkarni, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1962, pp. 196–203 (p. 198).

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

Kupa' after him, because of his knowledge of farming and interest in wells. On the night of 3 June 1947 he asked Balvantsinha to sleep in his room because he felt his death was near. Until midnight Dharmanand talked to Balvantsinha about his own yoga experiments; then he told him to go and sleep in his own room, the danger being temporarily over. At noon the following day he asked Balvantsinha to open all the windows and doors, saying pleasantly that he was ready. At 2:30 in the afternoon Dharmanand breathed his last, after a month of fasting. He was alert and able to converse, albeit in a faint voice, until ten minutes before his death. It was the first death over the eleven years of Sevagram's history, and Balvantsinha says he had 'never seen a nobler and more serene death in my life.'<sup>86</sup>

Dharmanand had left instructions that his body be disposed of in the cheapest possible manner, even suggesting burial. Gandhiji preferred an inexpensive cremation, provided the final decision was delegated to the ashram. Present at his cremation were his friends Kakasaheb Kalelkar and Vinoba Bhawe; the latter recited Vedic mantras. 'It was an inspiring sight—one of solemn splendour. Kosambiji's death was as noble as his life had been', says Balvantsinha.<sup>87</sup>

Gandhiji had said earlier, in a letter to Balvantsinha, that Dharmanand's stay in his ashram had 'sanctified it'.<sup>88</sup> In his prayer-speech on 5 June 1947 at Delhi, Gandhiji paid Dharmanand a tribute as a scholar and a dedicated man 'who preferred to work silently in the background' and never blew his own trumpet. He ended with this wish: 'May God inspire us all to walk in his footsteps.'<sup>89</sup>



The Kosambi family was devastated by Dharmanand's voluntary death. D.D.'s deep attachment to his father comes across in a muted but poignant reaction within his Editor's Preface to the collected and critical edition of Bhartrihari's epigrams, prepared for the Bharatiya

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 203. Incidentally the notice of Dharmanand's death in *Kesari* (6 June 1947) was based on this prayer meeting of Gandhiji.



Vidya Bhavan in 1948. The Preface is simply dated 4 June 1948, with no mention that it was Dharmanand's first death anniversary. The concluding paragraph reads:

... It is a matter for sorrow that [my father] did not choose to live till this work appeared, to judge with what success and results the critical methods which he himself taught me in my boyhood had been applied here. It seems to me that no major social problem of our times is solved by fasting to death, or by the parallel though more effective philosophy of the Mahatma. The dedication therefore is to the men from whose writings I first learned that society can and must be changed before we attain the stage at which human history will begin ...<sup>90</sup>

D.D. shared many common interests and ideological beliefs with his father, though these were somewhat veiled by the conspicuous contrast between his atheism and the religious preoccupations so central to Dharmanand's life. The strong bond between the two was enhanced by their shared faith in socialism, belief in the urgent need to work for world peace, and deep reverence for Gandhiji. (As an undergraduate at Harvard College, D.D. had Gandhiji's photo as the only decoration in his room.<sup>91</sup>) There was also an intellectual dimension to this: D.D. had learnt some Pali and Sanskrit from his father by osmosis, or, as he puts it, 'absorbed [them] a little through the pores without regular study.'<sup>92</sup> In 1927, when Dharmanand was also in the USA, D.D. pointed out to him a particular verse from *Jataka-Atthakatha*, which he had come across while reading this work in a German translation (which he was doing to improve his German). This was a historical reference to Vedic literature which Dharmanand pursued the following year, and which resulted in his discovering that the deity Indra was a historical person who was deified during his lifetime.<sup>93</sup> (Dharmanand's

<sup>90</sup> D.D. Kosambi, 'Editor's Preface', *Epigrams Attributed to Bhartrihari including the Three Centuries*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1948.

<sup>91</sup> Lawrence B. Arguimbau, "'Baba" of Harvard Days', in *Science and Human Progress: Prof. D.D. Kosambi Commemoration Volume*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1974, pp. 318–21 (p. 319).

<sup>92</sup> D.D. Kosambi, 'Steps in Science', reproduced in *Science and Human Progress*, pp. 193–205 (p. 199).

<sup>93</sup> Kosambi, *Hindi Sanskriti*, pp. 1–2.

Marathi article of 1928 on the Vedic Indra, however, did not produce the discussion he had expected.<sup>94</sup>)

At the same time, Dharmanand made demands on D.D. to produce consistently brilliant academic results. A Harvard classmate recalls that, during one particular semester, D.D. achieved what would generally have been regarded as an enviable result: three 'A's and a 'B'. This was not good enough for Dharmanand, who wrote angrily to D.D. saying if he wanted to waste his time getting B's, he should return to India forthwith. D.D. promptly enrolled himself in a summer course in Italian (his curriculum had included only Greek, Latin, French, and German), and earned an 'A+'. The course instructor wrote in a note that he had had to give such a grade for the first time in his career. D.D. sent the note to his father without comment.<sup>95</sup>

That Dharmanand tended to be less than considerate as a family man is stressed by Indrayani Sawkar, née Kunda Sathe, Dharmanand's granddaughter (the daughter of Mrs Manorama Sathe), who has written a fictionalized biography, *Bala-Bapu*, from the point of view of Balabai, her grandmother. Balabai, as we have seen, was practically deserted for about seven years while Dharmanand embarked on his educational and religious quest, and subsequently when he was away from home over long periods. Elsewhere Indrayani also argues that Dharmanand was somewhat autocratic with, at the least, his two oldest children: as for example when he promoted his daughter Manik's marriage. Dharmanand himself says in *Khulasa* that he had tried hard to persuade Manik on this matter.<sup>96</sup>

But the family man behind the public persona remains elusive. By all accounts he was a saintly man and popular with people in diverse social strata, even in diverse countries. P.M. Lad, a personal friend, paid him this tribute on his sixth death anniversary: "The real inspiration for Dharmanand's devotion to Buddhism stemmed not from

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 2. For an exact reference to the article, see the bibliography of Dharmanand's writings at the end of the present book.

<sup>95</sup> Arguimbau, 'Baba', p. 319.

<sup>96</sup> Cited in Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, pp. 296–7. Dharmanand wanted Manik to marry Dr B.K. Ram Prasad, an Iyengar Brahmin engineer whom he had known in the USA. Manik hesitated at first, not wishing to marry out of the caste, but agreed later to the proposal.

his learning but from his moral character [*shila*]. He lived like a sadhu. He travelled over much of the world, he found himself in a milieu that was unfavourable to his fundamental notion of moral character, but still he remained completely innocent and pure. He always emphasized moral character more than knowledge or learning.<sup>97</sup>

Yet it is mostly as a Buddhist scholar that Dharmanand is remembered, his niche in Maharashtra's intellectual history undisturbed to the present, a half century after his death. In a short article in the Marathi Encyclopaedia (*Vishwakosh*), Dharmanand's student, P.V. Bapat, projects him solely in terms of his quest for, and propagation and teaching of, Buddhism.<sup>98</sup> The contribution as a social thinker remains obscure even here.

The contexts in which Dharmanand has been remembered—straddling as he did the Marxist, the labour activist, the Gandhian, and the Buddhist fields—makes for an interesting study in the sociology of knowledge. The 'classic' political history of Maharashtra, *Adhunik Bharat* (Modern India, 1938) by Acharya S.D. Javdekar, a Tilakite turned Gandhian, makes no mention at all of Dharmanand.<sup>99</sup> This seems surprising in view of the overlap between the concerns of the two thinkers—the social structure suitable for independent India, which would combine the Gandhian ideology with socialism and a spiritual element. (Javdekar's interest in Marx and socialism post-dates 1938; he cites only English sources on the subject and was apparently unaware of Dharmanand's writings, which mostly pre-date 1938.) Y.D. Phadke's eight-volume political history, *Visavya Shatakantil Maharashtra* (Maharashtra in the Twentieth Century), mentions Dharmanand briefly in three places in Volume 4 (1930–9, published in 1993): once as a 'volunteer' in the salt satyagraha at Shirode (where Dharmanand had in fact been propelled into the leadership position, much against his will), and twice in connection with his propagation of the efficacy of the salt satyagraha in the villages around Pune in April 1930, in

<sup>97</sup> Lad, 'Dharmanand', p. 22, my translation.

<sup>98</sup> P.V. Bapat, 'Dharmanand Kosambi', in *Marathi Vishwakosh* (Encyclopedia), edited Laskshamanshastri Joshi, vol. 4, 1976, p. 386.

<sup>99</sup> S.D. Javdekar, *Adhunik Bharat* (Modern India), Pune: Continental Prakashan, rptd, 1994 (1938). The book was first published in 1938, and a second edition reviewing the subsequent fifteen years was published in 1953.

company with V.R. Shinde and others.<sup>100</sup> The third relevant overview, M.R. Lederle's *Philosophical Trends in Modern Maharashtra* (1976), which is still considered a standard work on the subject, takes no cognizance of Dharmanand.<sup>101</sup> This is also surprising because the book is comprehensive and deals with most trends in Maharashtra from about the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. It has a separate chapter on Gandhiji's influence on Maharashtra and mentions Buddhism, but mostly in connection with Ambedkar.

This marginalization of Dharmanand, one concludes, is the result of his having been a solitary thinker without a following. Additionally, there was his refusal to court public adulation, coupled with his plain speaking and unwillingness to compromise—so one should perhaps expect nothing other than this virtual absence of a proper appraisal. The ideas which enjoyed circulation and currency during most of the twentieth century were those presented by leaders of movements, or of sizeable social or political factions. The possibility has also been advanced by Kasbe that Dharmanand's analysis of socialism and its applicability in India were not easy to digest for the average Marathi reader, and even communists like S.A. Dange wrote in English rather than in Marathi.<sup>102</sup> It is also possible that the sometimes hostile attitude of Hindus towards Buddhism, especially in the Brahmin-dominated circles of Maharashtra, was exacerbated by Dharmanand's reiterated contrast between the violence inherent in the former religious ideology and the non-violence fundamental to the latter. Some believe that Dharmanand's devotion to Gandhiji led Ambedkar to marginalize him; but this remains a matter for speculation, given the lack of concrete proof. In any case, Ambedkar's followers are quite familiar with and respectful of Dharmanand.

Against this backdrop, a positive contrast is provided by Sadanand More's simultaneously scholarly and popular writings on Maharashtra which afford several glimpses of Dharmanand in various contexts. In

<sup>100</sup> Y.D. Phadke, *Visavya Shatakantil Maharashtra* (Maharashtra in the Twentieth Century), vol. 4 (1930–9), Pune: Shrividya Prakashan, 1993, pp. 67, 72, 254–5.

<sup>101</sup> M.R. Lederle, *Philosophical Trends in Modern Maharashtra*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1976.

<sup>102</sup> Personal communication.

his *Tukaram Darshan*, a survey of Maharashtra's cultural history, More deals in a separate chapter with Dharmanand's deep interest in Tukaram's life and philosophy, as well as the compatibility of the Buddha's teaching with Tukaram's—and Gandhiji's—in Dharmanand's ideological framework.<sup>103</sup> Elsewhere in the book More reinforces this connection in the case of nineteenth-century social reformers and scholars, including Dharmanand.<sup>104</sup> More's nuanced two-volume study, *Lokamanya te Mahatma*, is a comprehensive social, political, and cultural history of Maharashtra during the years from Tilak to Gandhi.<sup>105</sup> Here, all the salient facets of Dharmanand's activities are touched upon: his revival of Buddhism which intensified the religious discourse in Maharashtra; his effort to popularize the salt satyagraha and Gandhiji's ideology in rural Maharashtra; his imprisonment; and his deep interest in socialism.<sup>106</sup>

At the same time, the Buddhist connection has grown stronger, the Ambedkarite wave of interest having led to a general resurgence of interest in Dharmanand. According to Mahesh Deokar, any review of Buddhist Studies in India now gives extensive coverage to Dharmanand.<sup>107</sup> This trend has also highlighted Dharmanand's relevance as a thinker. If the Buddhists of Maharashtra are generally familiar with his name today, says Raosaheb Kasbe, it is because the Ambedkarite

<sup>103</sup> Sadanand More, *Tukaram Darshan: Maharashtra's Sanskritik Itihasachi Tukaram-kendrit Punarmandani* (A Tukaram-centric Re-presentation of Maharashtra's Cultural History), 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Ahmadnagar: Gaaj Prakashan, 2001 (1996), pp. 330–4, also p. 329.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 402, 430.

<sup>105</sup> Sadanand More, *Lokamanya te Mahatma* (From Lokamanya to Mahatma), Pune: Rajahans Prakashan, 2007.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 836, 849, 851, 904, and 960. The book also has a photo of Dharmanand on p. 835.

<sup>107</sup> In support of this, Dr Deokar has shared with me the following Hindi publications: L.G. Meshram, 'Maharashtra ke Vishwa-vidyalayon me Pali tatha Baudha-vidya ke Adhyayan ki Sthiti', *Pali and Buddhist Studies: Retrospect and Prospects*, The International Buddhist Conference, 8–9 December 2005, pp. 226–36; and Vimalakirti, 'Marathi Saitya par Baudha Dhamma ka Prabhav', in *Buddhism in Indian Literature*, edited by Narendra K. Dash, pp. 227–47.

scholars of his generation, who came of age in the 1970s, have talked and written extensively about him.<sup>108</sup>

It is heartening to know that the relevance of this scholar and thinker is now increasingly recognized.<sup>109</sup> Ironically, this concern with recognition would have seemed irrelevant if not futile to Dharmanand himself. His primary aim was to ignite an interest in Buddhism, and the current scenario would have provided him some encouragement. His other quest—for a humane, happy, and peaceful world—would obviously have to continue for a long while yet.

<sup>108</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>109</sup> Recently, two PhD students (one at Pune University and the other at Kolhapur University) have chosen to do their theses partly or wholly on Dharmanand.

PART I

Autobiographical Writings

A Narrative (*Nivedan*),  
1912–1924<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is a translation of Dharmanand Kosambi's *Nivedan*, Mumbai: Manoranjak Grantha Prakashan, 1924. The footnotes are mine. The few footnotes that exist in the original text have been incorporated within round brackets into the body of the present translation.—M.K.

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18. A Passage to America

### Preface

A weekly [Marathi-Portuguese] paper entitled *Bharat* is published in Goa. It was initially managed by certain young enthusiasts. When I returned from my first trip to America, they insisted that I write an account of my travels from the time of my renouncing home to the time of my return from America. Accordingly, I wrote the first chapter or two and sent them to the editor of *Bharat*. Upon reading them the editor got the impression that this was not a travelogue but an autobiography, and he changed the title from *Maza Pravas* [My Travels] to *Atma-vritta* [An Autobiography]. At the time, Shri Shambarao Krishnaji Sardesai was the editor of *Bharat*'s Marathi section; from the very next issue he changed the caption '*Atma-vritta*' to '*Atma-nivedan*' [An Autobiographical Narrative]. Actually, the first couple of chapters were merely introductory; the main objective was the travel account. Thus the caption 'My Travels' would not have been inappropriate for the book as a whole. However, I did not object to the caption given by Shri Shambarao; and the first thirteen chapters as well as a portion of the fourteenth were published in *Bharat* under it. But many of my Goan brothers referred to this travelogue as *Nivedan* [A Narrative], omitting the word *Atma* [Autobiographical]. Emulating them, I have as a matter of convenience retained it as the title of this book.

*Nivedan* started being published in *Bharat* from November 1912 and continued until February 1916. The reason for this long duration was that *Bharat* did not appear regularly once the Great World War began. Initially, I sent them the chapters one by one. But when I decided to go to America again [in 1918], I prepared chapters 14 to 18 in 1916 or 1917 and handed them over to my friend Shri Vishnu Ramchandra Naik. My plan was to get the book published in Goa through him, but on account of various difficulties this did not succeed; and

the manuscript remained with him. Finally, when it became clear that the book could not be published in Goa, I handed over the first thirteen chapters, published serially in *Bharat*, as well as the handwritten version of the following chapters, to my friend Shri Damodar Raghunath Mitra. I consider that by publishing this book he has expressed his love for me.

Many gentlemen and monks displayed their courteousness and generosity by helping me on many occasions.<sup>2</sup> In this book they have been also described as having, on other occasions, refrained from helping me or behaving in a manner that discouraged me. Many may think that these latter references should not have been included. But the inclusion of these references does not arise from any desire to degrade my patrons and friends. I cherish great respect for them all, and most of them are aware of this. The path I adopted ran contrary to the ways of the world, and it was quite natural for everyone to feel that it would be difficult for me to succeed. The wonder is that, despite this belief, my patrons did not shun me completely and have retained their affection for me!

I am very grateful to Shri Vitthal Jivaji Nadkarni for his excellent help in reading the proofs of this book.

DHARMANAND KOSAMBI  
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### 1. Childhood Memories

I was born in the village of Sankhwal in the Salsette province of Goa, on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1876, at about five in the morning. My mother's name was Anandibai and my father's Damodar. We were seven siblings—two sons and five daughters. Of these seven, I was the youngest. My mother fell ill soon after my birth and could not nurse me, so that I had to survive on the milk of a wet nurse—as I am told. When I was six months old, my left leg suddenly swelled with pus. A *vaidya* from

<sup>2</sup> The word *grihastha* has been translated as 'householder' or 'gentleman', depending upon the context. 'Monks' is a translation of *bhikshus*.

Kansub made an incision above the knee, drained the pus, and cured the leg. But it remained permanently weak.

When our grandfather Ramchandra Kosambe came to Sankhwal, the village was almost deserted. Although it had improved a great deal by my childhood, almost every couple of days tigers could be heard roaring after six in the evening. Adjacent to our house was a small shop belonging to Subrai Kamat. To the south was the house of Bhikhu Shenvi Sanzagiri. He had no son; but his two widowed daughters and a widowed granddaughter lived in his house. Narayan Shenvi Sanzagiri was also our neighbour. (At present his son lives there and has made substantial repairs to the original house.) In addition to these three Brahmin houses, there were nearby about eight Hindu Shudra houses and about six Christian Shudra houses. I did not mix much with the Christian children; I think my father had forbidden it. But perhaps he had not strictly forbidden me against playing with the children of the Hindu Shudras because I remember going about with them frequently. It was well known that I was the slowest among all my friends, or rather among all the children in the village. I could not even eat properly until I was about nine. If my friends beat me I did not—or, more accurately, could not—carry a complaint home. Some of my father's friends often said to him that they considered me to be a great burden on him.

My father probably may have held a different view. I was slow enough to utterly disappoint the average father. Even so, my father cherished the strong hope that I would turn out bright. A village astrologer had predicted that I would become learned, but not wealthy; and he believed it implicitly. He thought I would at least become the village accountant (*escrivado da comunidade*).

He was greatly concerned about my education, but had no idea how to provide it. At first I learned to write the alphabet at home, on a wooden board sprinkled with fine dust. Then I was sent to Madgaon for a few months, where I learned to read the Second or Third book. Later I was sent to my sister at Chikhali, where I studied for about six months in a school run by a teacher called Bhikambhatji.<sup>3</sup> When I had learnt all that he had to teach, I was sent at the age of about ten to the school of Raghoba Gopal Prabhu at Arobe. He was very strict, but

<sup>3</sup> The suffix 'bhat' or 'bhatji' is used as an honorific for Brahmin priests.

renowned for his learning. He was well pleased with me. He had given nicknames to all his students—mine was 'a vegetable dish of ladies' fingers'; it is quite soft, but sweet to taste, he used to say. I went to his school only for about three months. I had to cross the river from Chikhali and usually reached late. Later I fell ill and stopped going to school. But whatever education I managed, I acquired in this school. I developed a strong taste for mathematics. In school I had learnt up to the arithmetic problems involving the rule of three;<sup>4</sup> later I solved mathematical problems up to the decimal point all by myself, at home.

Because of ill health I was brought home again from Chikhali. After spending almost a year at home, I went in 1888 to Shahapur-Belgaum to stay with my sister. There I was enrolled in the Marathi Standard II of the government school. It was not surprising that I stood first in my class, because I was already able to solve all the problems set for Standard V. I stood first in all the subjects—except gymnastics. After the annual examination I was at once promoted to Standard V. Here too I retained the first rank. But I did not stay much longer in this class. Within two months I fell ill and returned to Goa. Most of my childhood friends at Shahapur did not even reach matriculation. Only Shri Nagesh Vasudev Gunaji made it up to the BA, LIB. After leaving Shahapur I made one or two attempts to join a Portuguese school, but failed utterly. I could not take to the Portuguese language, for a variety of reasons. I had a strong desire to learn Sanskrit, but this could not be fulfilled. Finally, fed up with schooling, I stayed home. Nor did my father put much pressure on me. He had presumably abandoned his aim of making me the village accountant!

## 2. Youth

*'Is there anyone in this vast world whose youth has been free of passion?'—Kadambari [Skt]*<sup>5</sup>

In Western countries it would be considered ridiculous to call a fourteen-year-old boy a young man, or a twelve-year-old girl a young woman. Even in our country, such infants would not have been

<sup>4</sup> 'Rule of three' is a translation of *trairashik*.

<sup>5</sup> *Kadambari* is a long story in Sanskrit by Banabhatta.



labelled young men and women in the age of the rishis—not even by a madman. But today one finds any number of fourteen-year-old mothers and sixteen-year-old fathers in this Aryabhumi! Such being the case, my Maharashtrian readers should not be surprised to learn that I became a young man at fourteen. I do not mean that my body was fully developed, but only that the passions characteristic of youth took firm hold of me. Many of my friends were married, others engrossed in a profound exploration of the ultimate meaning of marriage, and some had acquired knowledge of the essence of youth through *devadasis*. Under these circumstances, it was clearly impossible that I alone remain undeveloped and immature.

My father had rented a coconut grove on a ninety-year lease, about two miles from our house. He visited it twice a day, and I started accompanying him. The main job there was to protect the coconuts from monkeys and thieves. In our free time we did other chores, such as letting water into channels, watering the banana trees, and repairing the enclosing wall where it was broken. Gradually, I learned to climb coconut trees and started going to the grove when my father was away. But once night fell I grew afraid and felt a compulsion to return home in the company of the Bhandaris who tapped toddy. Their company naturally had a very bad effect on me. It was not as though I began drinking toddy and indulged in vice. But their terribly vulgar conversation among themselves affected me badly, and my mind was filled with low thoughts. The presence of my family members saved me from indulging in the physical vices, but I was guilty of mental impurities and even now suffer from their poisonous effect.

Towards the end of 1891 or the beginning of 1892 I gradually developed a taste for reading. No one was instrumental in this happening; my mind was drawn spontaneously to reading. First I started reading *Arabi Bhashetil Suras va Chamatkarik Goshiti* [*Arabian Nights*].<sup>6</sup> Soon thereafter I discovered the monthly magazine *Pathya-bodh* [broadly, 'Salutary Advice', devoted to topics of health and morality] edited by Ramchandra Pandurang Vaidya. A poem in this magazine, entitled '*Gupta Rog*' [Secret Diseases], provided me with good advice. The things I had found pleasurable earlier now seemed damaging; matters

<sup>6</sup> The *Arabian Nights* was translated into Marathi largely by Krishnashastri Chiplunkar, father of Vishnushastri.

entirely different now rippled through my mind. But before these new thoughts took firm root I was married—in June 1891! I acquired the stamp of youth.

As my reading increased, so did my dissatisfaction. Great men like Vishnushastri [Chiplunkar] and Agarkar served the country to the best of their ability and are regarded as blessed. But what hope had I of performing deeds like theirs? What learning, enthusiasm, and courage they possessed! And here was I, bereft of all these things. Why should one like me—a human being, but akin to an animal—continue to live in this world? Would it not be better to swallow poison and put an end to my worldly journey? Such were the thoughts that crowded my mind. I lacked the courage to swallow poison; and so I survived the phase. Yet an unenlightened young man like me could not, needless to say, extinguish the flame of anxiety. For a long time I would suddenly awake in the middle of the night heaving loud sighs, my heart palpitating; and sleep would usually evade me. This was the time I became a devotee of the *gudgudi*.<sup>7</sup> But the *gudgudi* increased rather than decreased my palpitations.

Our family deity is Ramnath. At present his temple is at Bandivade. A Gurav [non-Brahmin priest] there would be possessed by Vetāl [the Demon] on the day of Dasara [or Vijayadashami], and he would exorcise ghosts and spirits. My father had implicit faith in Ramnath and in the Vetāl under his patronage. So he took me off there on Dasara day, made me do namaskar to the man possessed by the Vetāl, did namaskar himself, and laid before him the complaint about my chest ailment. The Gurav probably knew there was a Christian cemetery to the east of our house, at a distance. He made a vague response to the effect that I had one night taken fright eastward of our house: that was when a spirit had attacked me. But I could remember no such occurrence. My father said, 'So what if you don't remember it? There's a cemetery there, which means there's a strong likelihood of your having been frightened.' Finally, the possessed man gave me sacred ash after uttering a mantra over it, and asked me to eat it together with the holy water from the god's temple. To please my father I ate the ash and drank the holy water, but it brought no relief at all.

<sup>7</sup> A *gudgudi* is a small, rudimentary version of the hookah, made of wooden pipes and coconut shells.

Just as I used the *gudgudi* at night to overcome the chest ailment, so I found reading useful during the day. I felt all right so long as I was busy reading. Naturally I was strongly drawn to reading; but how could our village have had an adequate supply of books? I finished reading all the books in it, such as *Vridhdha Chanakya* [Old Chanakya]. Then I grew worried over what to do next. In our house there was a copy of our saint Tukaram's *Gatha* [Collected Verses], published by the Indu-Prakash Press.<sup>8</sup> My sister sometimes read verses from it. I started reading it casually. At the time I did not care much for the verses. But the biography of Tukaram at the beginning made such a deep impression upon me that I read it several times and committed to memory some of its verses. Reading this biography cured me of my chest ailment. I lamented my poverty, but Tukaram-buva had been insolvent! I bemoaned my ignorance, but Tukoba had not had available to him one-tenth the means of knowledge that I had! I lamented being married, but Tukoba had had two wives! Even when faced with greater worldly difficulties than me, what advances Tukoba had made in his spiritual life! The sorrows of worldly life had seemed beneficial to him rather than injurious. Why then should I be lamenting? Perhaps I would not gain knowledge and wealth; but would I not be able, if I tried, to gain the virtues that Tukoba possessed? I began to hope that if I donned the armour of Renunciation and joined battle with the Six Enemies with the help of weapons made of Virtues such as Truth, I would, one day, emerge victorious.<sup>9</sup> I began to feel that I wanted to earn no name or fame, but only become saintly like Tukoba. I began to sit in solitude and strengthen such thoughts—which cured my heart ailment completely.

We had a relative named Bhiku Pundalik Naik. His father was my father's maternal uncle; his sister was my paternal uncle's wife. But his affection for me much exceeded feelings of kinship and I really

<sup>8</sup> Sant Tukaram lived in the seventeenth century and is regarded as one of the foremost leaders of the devotional Varkari movement, about equal in stature to its founder Sant Dnyaneshwar of the late thirteenth century (who wrote a Marathi commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* entitled *Dnyaneshwari*). Sant Tukaram is known respectfully as Tukaram-buva—*buva* being an honorific suffix attached to the names of religious teachers—or its abbreviation Tukoba.

<sup>9</sup> The Six Enemies are: sexual passion, anger, desire, love, pride, and envy or jealousy.

appreciated his thoughts. I would spend about ten days or so every month at his house in Madgaon. Certain wags derisively called me his 'tail'! It was his company that made me understand quite clearly that practices such as drink, child marriage, Shimga [celebrations], and caste are detrimental to both individuals and the nation. I derived one more advantage, in that I made many acquaintances in Madgaon. I could borrow books from these gentlemen. For several years I continued the routine of collecting as many books as I could, reading them at home, and then returning them. The disadvantage was that Bhiku Naik's company strengthened my addiction to the *gudgudi*, as also my habit of taking a nap after a meal of rice gruel. But on the whole I certainly benefited from the association.

Sonba Mangesh Mulgaonkar was the son of my paternal female cousin. It was a distant relationship, but we formed a close friendship. He was three years my junior. His intelligence became obvious from the time he studied at Madgaon. He composed good Marathi poetry. In January 1895 he opened a general store adjacent to our house. He had no liking for this business but was forced into it; there was no alternative. Our thoughts were very similar. We spent our time in reading and useful conversation.

My older brother [Ramchandra] had since 1892 begun staying with our maternal aunt in the village of Kholgad in Kankon province. Aunt's young son had died and there was no one else to manage her land. So my brother stayed and supervised her farms and orchards. Here, my father was getting old, so that all domestic responsibilities devolved upon me. From the age of sixteen I managed all the dealings. There were many calamities and many obstacles. But I managed everything well, and to the best of my ability. Gradually, I derived a great deal of courage from the life of Tukaram-buva and from reading other books, and my life acquired a kind of stability. I began to feel that I had liberated myself from the state of being swayed by the passions of youth.

### 3. General Conditions

Shri Bhiku Pundalik Naik said to me, once: 'Had you been born in Europe, your intelligence would have shone brightly; but what use is it here? Your whole life is going to be wasted chasing away monkeys!'

My own imagination had not taken me beyond this prediction either. I believed myself incapable of all important achievement; it seemed enough that I could manage to be of some service to my family. It is not as if ripples of fancy did not surge through my mind from time to time—a desire to achieve something for the welfare of my country through means such as social and religious reform. But it vanished within my mind like anger in an insignificant man. Even if reform were to be introduced within just my own region, the conditions seemed unfavourable. For example, I felt that the money spent by our Hindu brothers of Mathagram [Madgaon] on the [festival of] Shimga at Jambavli should be utilized instead towards a public school. But who would pay attention to one such as myself? The Shimga at Jambavli did not stop; on the contrary it ‘improved’—whereas earlier, a single troupe of dancing girls had performed, now there were two!

Readers outside Goa cannot really visualize the Shimga at Jambavli, so it seems appropriate to provide some information. The patron god of Madgaon is Damodar. In earlier times, his temple stood at Madgaon. But when the Portuguese conquered Goa and began converting people on a large scale, the villagers picked up the image of their god and installed it in the village of Jambavli, in the province under the princely state of Sonde. Of the festivities associated with this god, Shimga is the chief one. The Saraswat Brahmins and Vanis of Madgaon celebrate it by collecting contributions among themselves. For this purpose, around 1897 a small tax was by common consent levied on the import trade of Madgaon, and amounted to Rs 700 to 800 annually. (I do not know the amount of tax collected now.) There were additional contributions. The Shimga expenditure included free meals to all residents—young and old—of Jambavli for seven days, performances by dancing girls, lighting in the awning, and miscellaneous other items.<sup>10</sup> All these arrangements were contracted out. Young people staged plays at night and assumed vulgar guises during the day to amuse spectators. The dancing girls began their performances in the evening and ended at about nine. One may still find several devout people in our province who believe that Shimga is a function meant for the god. But it had—and still has—an evil effect on most young people. The *agrashalas*

<sup>10</sup> ‘Awning’ here is a translation of *mandap*.

attached to the Damodar temple are not sufficient for five to seven hundred people.<sup>11</sup> One of the *agrashalas* is reserved for dining. Naturally, many have perforce to stay in the houses of the prostitutes of the area.<sup>12</sup> In such circumstances even a good man is likely to go astray, never mind the empty-headed young men who think the ultimate objective of life is to paint their faces and dance on stage.

My father did not like plays or *tamashas* at all.<sup>13</sup> But he believed that the god liked Shimga, and so mortals should not obstruct it. He contributed an annual rupee towards the festivity; he also went to Jambavli to arrange *abbhishek* for the god and gave *dakshina* to the priests.<sup>14</sup> Once, on account of his advancing age, I was required to attend the Shimga—in 1893 or 1894. One of our relatives had found accommodation at a prostitute’s house. Lacking an alternative, I was compelled to stay there for a night and was astonished to see the strange behaviour of some of the young men. The owner of the house, an ageing prostitute, asked me point blank why I had not joined the other young men! I think it inappropriate to recount her precise words here, but she probably uttered them in the belief that offering advice to young men was self-evidently her right! The next day I left Jambavli at dawn and never again attended Shimga. Moreover, I stopped the annual rupee contribution.

About ten or fifteen years ago there was a wave in Goa for staging plays. If the residents of Mhapusa staged a play, the residents of Panaji staged two! Plays were put up at Shimga, at Ram-navmi, at Hanuman-jayanti, at fairs! These were detrimental to the young people of Goa. Many followed the custom of labouring a whole year to save money and then squandering it on costumes for stage characters. Many began worshipping Lady Liquor to gather the courage to speak on a stage! My father cleansed himself with a bath if so much as touched by a drop of liquor—such was the extent to which the older generation considered

<sup>11</sup> *Agrashalas* are hereditary houses donated to Brahmins.

<sup>12</sup> The word used for prostitutes here, *kalavantins*, originally probably denoted devadasis.

<sup>13</sup> *Tamasha* here denotes a form of folk theatre with a largely erotic and vulgar content.

<sup>14</sup> *Abhishek* denotes the very slow dripping of water on the image of a deity.

liquor polluting. Whereas now the Hindus of Goa have become such devotees of Lady Liquor that they would withstand a whole troop of the Temperance Society!

Under these circumstances it was clearly impossible for me to attempt religious or social reform. Even so, I followed the dictum: 'Speak out what you see, and do what you can.' I was a great devotee of swadeshi. Good swadeshi clothes were not available in Goa, so I had to wear crudely made ones. Such behaviour usually resulted in my being counted among the insane. The only consolation was that some of my young friends—few enough to be counted on the fingers of one hand—supported me. Of these, Shri Vishnu Rangaji Sheladekar and Shri Shridhar Prabhu Mhatre are still alive. Vishnupant's company was very dear to me. My acquaintance with Shridharpant was not of long duration, but the consequence of his company was that I formed an attachment to Marathi poets such as Vaman and Moropant.<sup>15</sup> Not that my friends and I agreed on matters social and religious; but our differences of opinion were not likely to cause a rift between us. Under the circumstances, this was the only path to self-improvement open to me. But even this was rendered difficult by domestic problems.

I was disinclined to deal with officialdom, but was compelled to. I was most interested in learning Sanskrit, but this proved impossible for lack of opportunity and the unfeasibility of staying away from home for any length of time. I borrowed and read Dr Bhandarkar's Marathi translations of Sanskrit books and committed to memory about thirty verses from the second canto of [Kalidasa's] *Raghuvamsha*. But how much knowledge of Sanskrit could this provide? My Marathi reading, however, continued unceasing. I followed the practice of reading [Vishnushastri Chiplunkar's series of essays] *Nibandha-mala*, Agar-kar's essays, Moropant's *Bharat*, *Dnyaneshwari*, newspapers, magazines, novels, advertisements for sugar-coated pills by Murray and Lanman—in short, whatever I could lay my hands on. It was the only means of self-improvement available to me.

<sup>15</sup> Moropant was the most famous and prolific of the scholarly or 'pandit' poets of the eighteenth century. His contemporary Vaman Pandit was also renowned. Poets of this tradition of Sanskritized poetry were also known as 'pant poets' (*pant-kavi*) in contrast with devotional poets (*sant-kavi*).

#### 4. Renouncing My Homeland

Fed up with my situation, in 1894 I once travelled up to Kolhapur with the intention of learning Sanskrit. I stayed in the compound of the Mahalakshmi temple. A couple of Konkastha [i.e. Chitpavan] Brahmin students living there helped me a great deal. They arranged for me to eat at a public eating-house.<sup>16</sup> When I asked about their own eating arrangements, one of them answered, 'If we get food that has been offered to the goddess, we eat right there. Otherwise there is the usual "*Om bhavati*"!' I did not understand this. So he explained that it meant begging for food, which requires the supplicant to say '*Om bhavati bhiksham dehi*'!<sup>17</sup> Something now became clear to me: during my thread ceremony, our priest had placed a begging bowl in my hands and asked me to utter, '*Om bhavati bhiksham dehi*'. Now I understood what it meant. But I lacked the courage to subsist on '*Om bhavati*'. I really missed my aged father greatly. So I left Kolhapur and returned to Madgaon even before running out of my savings. Having received no news of me, my father too had arrived in Madgaon. I begged his pardon by placing my head on his feet. He said, 'If you leave home again, I'll have to leave home too in search of you. Keep this in mind, then do as you please.' I felt contrite and gave up all thought of leaving the country.<sup>18</sup>

In 1896 the rains were poor throughout India; Goa too suffered from the drought. Foodgrains such as *nachani* would not grow and the poor suffered a great deal. We ourselves were not adversely affected by the famine. But when it rained in 1897, a disease similar to diarrhoea began. In August all but one or two in our family fell ill. I did not, but was exhausted nursing the others. My sister-in-law, already ailing, was badly affected by the disease. She became very weak, and then died on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1897. I had been surprised all along when people lamented the death of a relative, believing within myself that if death was the general rule, why let it cause such aggravation? But when this fate befell my sister-in-law, I lost heart, I could not control

<sup>16</sup> 'Public eating house' is a translation of *khaanaaval*.

<sup>17</sup> Sanskrit for 'O Respected One, give me some food'.

<sup>18</sup> 'Country' here denotes the region of Goa.

my sorrow when her little children wept. In sum, on that occasion I experienced the truth of the saying: 'The suffering of others always seems mild.' It was the beginning of a chain of calamities that was to befall me.

Sonba Mangesh Mulgaonkar's paternal uncle Sadashivrao Mulgaonkar lived in Lohar Chawl, in Mumbai. He had a job at a salary of Rs 100 per month. He had never inquired after his nephew. But in 1896 he came to Goa to visit his family deity, Mangesh, and invited his nephew to go with him to Mumbai. Sonba's mother had no desire to send her son to Mumbai, but I advised him to go. In Mumbai he finished three English school years within a single year. Because of his simple and straightforward nature, his uncle and aunt began to love him more than they did their own son. In 1896, when the plague first struck Mumbai, Sonba and his paternal cousin came to Goa to stay with us, returning home after about six months. The plague struck again in 1897. Sonba's uncle had already built a hut at Matunga but was too ill to leave home.<sup>19</sup> The plague was widespread in Lohar Chawl, so they all came to Girgaum, where the family servant contracted plague. Sonba too was infected. Within twenty-four hours, on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1898, this dreadful disease delivered Sonba over to cruel Death.

On 28<sup>th</sup> March 1898, my wife's brother Dr Sakharam Lad arrived at our house from Panaji. He brought news of Sonba's death—I could not believe it. But just then the postman brought a letter. The address was not in Sonba's handwriting; it was a letter from his cousin. I cannot describe how much the contents grieved me. For days afterwards I could scarcely eat. My mind was in chaos, I was unable to think.

*You are grieving for one whose path—both arriving and departing—you are ignorant of, whose origin and end you know not! If grief is likely to be of use, then alone should a wise man indulge in grief, feeling confused and tormenting the body! But grief torments the body and makes a man thin and pale, and his grief does not protect the dead. Thus it is futile to grieve.—Salla-sutta [Pali]*

This is the nectarlike counsel of the Buddha. Had I found, at the time, a physician who could treat me with such medicine, would not

<sup>19</sup> Matunga was then a sparsely populated part of north Mumbai.

I have been greatly benefited? I became thin and pale, as described in these verses; moreover, I came to be permanently affected by the ailment called dyspepsia.

At this time our family's financial circumstances were not happy. Miscellaneous debts had mounted and I bore the responsibility for repaying them. Besides, I was so bewildered by my friend's death that I no longer felt like being in Goa. I wrote out a complete account of the debt, took two rupees with me, left home on 30<sup>th</sup> May, and travelled up to Gokarna. Finding no means of subsistence in that unfamiliar place, I was compelled to return home on 16<sup>th</sup> June. The homecoming did nothing to diminish my mental confusion. I spent a whole day sitting in the forest; later I locked myself into my room, speaking to no one. A rumour spread in the village that I had gone mad; but I could not care less.

One of our relatives, Vishnu Ramchandra Naik, came from Madgaon to inquire after me. Perhaps he thought I had been driven nearly to insanity by the debt—although the real cause was quite different. He gave me advice and said I should not be frightened by the debt, some solution would be found. So then I decided, with his counsel, that my father's land should be mortgaged jointly to him and Bhiku Pundalik Naik; they would together advance me the sum we needed, and with it we would repay our miscellaneous debts. In accordance with this plan, we went to Madgaon. But Shri Bhiku Naik refused to pay half the amount. In the end, Shri Vishnu Naik paid the entire amount and freed me from debt, thus removing a major obstacle to my leaving Goa. (In March 1912 I paid him back the entire amount [i.e. with interest] and freed myself from debt. But by helping me in an emergency, he placed me permanently in his debt.)

On 28<sup>th</sup> August 1898, while I was in Madgaon, my father died suddenly of paralysis. On this occasion too I was struck down by grief. I lost all interest in domestic affairs. In 1897 I had read the life of Lord Buddha in *Bal-bodh*.<sup>20</sup> I had since then gradually developed great faith in the Buddha. My distaste for domestic life now strengthened my faith in the Buddha. I began to feel that the Buddha had become for me an all-encompassing figure. I had earlier spoken to my friends about the Buddha; now I started communing with myself. I began a

<sup>20</sup> *Bal-bodh*: 'Advice to Children', a Marathi magazine.

routine of imagining an image of the Buddha and meditating upon it, and reading over and over again his life in *Bal-bodh*. I resolved that if I were to go on living, I would do nothing other than obtain knowledge of the Buddha's religion. I began to feel that my life would be fulfilled if I acquired knowledge of the Buddha's teaching—regardless of the calamities that might befall me and the disasters that might strike me.

In November or December 1898 I came across *Kerala-Kokil*, in which I read the news that the Saraswat community had opened a new school at Cochin.<sup>21</sup> So I thought of going there to learn English and thus acquiring whatever little knowledge I could of the Buddha's teaching. Accordingly, on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1899 I travelled from Madgaon by steamer to Mangalore. But within a fortnight I returned home from Mangalore.

My brother-in-law Dr Sakharam Lad returned from Portugal on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1899 and stayed with us for three months. Later, he set up a household at Mhapusa and began medical practice. On 26<sup>th</sup> October 1899 my first daughter [Manik] was born at Chikhali, at the house of Dr Lad. On the occasion of her sixth-day ceremony, four gentlemen and I dined with Dr Lad. At this his neighbours raised a caste-based dispute and brought an order from the religious head of the Shaivites to excommunicate us.<sup>22</sup> Three of the gentlemen underwent an expiation ritual and extricated themselves, but Dr Kashinath Lad and I refused to do so. My behaviour greatly displeased our relatives.

Giving up the idea of travelling south, I thought of travelling north. Pune being the centre of Maharashtra, I thought I might make some headway there. My friend Shri Vishnu Rangaji Sheladekar had promised to give me a letter of introduction to Shri Anant Ramkrishna Redkar (who was a head clerk at the Pune branch office of the Southern Maratha Railway). He had written earlier to Redkar about me, but received no reply. Here, I was in a hurry to leave Goa. So I decided to go to Pune and meet him, instead of awaiting his reply; so I went to Madgaon in

<sup>21</sup> *Kerala-Kokil*: 'Nightingale of Kerala', a Marathi magazine.

<sup>22</sup> 'Caste-based dispute' is a translation of *gramanya*. Crossing the sea was then thought to make a Hindu lose his caste, and thus his religion. This could be rectified by an expiatory ritual, failing which the person—and those who dined with him—could be excommunicated.

the last week of November 1899. My relative Shri Bhiku Naik gave me Rs 10 for my expenses, and Shri Vishnu Naik Rs 15. I usually stayed with Shri Bhiku Naik at Madgaon, but this time he did not let me—for fear of being excommunicated himself. I told him I could be served my food separately and that I was willing to smear cowdung on the floor afterwards.<sup>23</sup> It was my misfortune that he did not see fit to take pity on me. The plan was that Vishnupant Sheladekar would meet me at Madgaon, but instead of meeting me personally he sent a letter with his brother addressed to Redkar. I had to stay at Madgaon for a couple of days for this letter. But no food arrangements could be made in Madgaon, so I stayed with my sister at Banavali. Vishnupant's letter came on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, and I decided to leave the next day. In those days the train left Madgaon at 6 or 6:30 a.m. Madras time, so it was not possible to catch the train if I stayed at Banavali. I entreated Shri Bhiku Naik to at least give me one evening meal, because it would save me being compelled to go to a public eating-house; but he did not accede. In the end I ate at a public eating-house and slept somewhere in Madgaon. The following day, on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, I left Madgaon. My only luggage was a copper drinking vessel and a cloth carpet given by Shri Vishnu Naik.

## 5. Diary and Notes

*It is better to first fix the peg firmly by shaking it, and then do everything else with its support.—Tukaram*

From 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1895, I started writing a diary in an old notebook with which there are also some notes made in 1898–99. On my return home after seven years, I found this notebook among old papers. Right now I find it very useful when recounting old events. I do not know where the diary for 1896 went. After I left Goa for Pune, I started making notes separately. In 1904 I sealed a book of these notes and gave it to the secretary of the Mahabodhi Sabha of Calcutta [for safe-keeping]. But later, all the books of the Mahabodhi Sabha were moved to Sarnath near Kashi, where many books were eaten by termites, and

<sup>23</sup> An act to signify purification of the area.

many misplaced. My book of notes was lost during the move and I have not yet got it. I made great efforts to find it, but to no avail. If I had that notebook with me now, it would have greatly facilitated the writing of my autobiographical account from this point on.

I have no desire to bore readers by reproducing my entire diary from the existing old notebook or by citing long notes. But it is essential that readers who do not know me be made aware of the direction of my thoughts before I left Goa for Pune. Many believe I left home because I was fed up, and that my progress was only a consequence of good fortune. Many others think my religious and social views changed after I left Goa. I cite below a couple of extracts from my notes in order to dispel these and other erroneous assumptions.

*Advice to Children (which I had addressed to my nephews): Sankhwal, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1896, Jyeshtha Shuddha Dwitiya,<sup>24</sup> Sunday*

Children, I intend leaving you something when I am gone. I have absolutely no wealth, so I am noting down for you my meagre experience of this world. I hope you will make good use of it. If this notebook survives the passage of time, you will find it when you are full grown. Read what I have written. You will find many things here that are useful for domestic life.

Children, I sincerely hope you will be good guardians to your children, even if you do not have good guardians yourselves. If your guardians did not train you for a proper vocation, you should learn it by yourselves; follow the right path and serve as models for your children and friends, and offer assistance to those more ignorant and poor than yourselves—this too is my earnest desire.

Not a single good guardian is to be found now in the Hindu community of our Gomantak. This means you will not get a good guardian. [Your parents] may send you to various places for your studies; even so, it is unlikely that you will acquire a good guardian because, as the saying goes, 'Every family has the same ways'. I say this from my

<sup>24</sup> The second day of the bright fortnight in the month of Jyeshtha of the Hindu lunar calendar.

own experience. For lack of a good guardian you may fall under the influence of much that is evil and this may cause you grief all your life, like a tiny pebble in a shoe. Let us consider what these things are. First, your guardians' ignorance will lead to your not getting good teachers, leaving you ignorant. There is nothing as dreadful as ignorance in this world. Second, if a person is not taught a craft with due consideration paid to his aptitude, there are problems. I had repeatedly requested my revered father to arrange Sanskrit lessons for me, but he paid no heed. I felt this as a great loss. Third, bad company. If your guardians do not make careful inquiries about the friends you move around with, you will suffer the ill effects of bad company. Your sexual desires will awaken too early, you will develop addictions such as smoking the *gudgudi*, and you will acquire other bad habits that will afflict your future. Fourth, child marriage. If your guardians are ignorant and reasonably well-to-do, they will confine you to wedlock in your childhood. And then your in-laws will treat you with great respect despite your youth. This is likely to make you vain.

Little ones, if you are affected by even one of these things, you will, without a doubt, be harmed. And the fruit of this will be visited, if you are married, upon your poor wife and future progeny. Let us now consider how you may extricate yourselves from all this.

Children, if you remain ignorant when you reach adulthood, you will be saddened and wish to overcome your ignorance. But you will not succeed without firmness of resolve. Many have now begun getting educated as adults, but only a very few have succeeded in pursuing it to completion. Why? Some say that childhood is the most suitable period for an education; and this is largely true. But this does not mean one cannot acquire an education later, in one's youth. The main reason for not succeeding in one's studies during youth, despite interest in studying, is embarrassment: 'I am grown up, how can I study now?' Such are the thoughts that drive one away from studies. The acquisition of knowledge requires a strong devotion to the Goddess of Learning. Surely you know that no goddess is propitiated without devotion. In addition, you should rid yourselves of embarrassment. Consider all embarrassment which creates obstacles towards devotion to the Goddess of Learning to be wicked. Allowing embarrassment to interfere in what is right and beneficial means inviting sorrow. Direct your feeling of embarrassment towards bad deeds: that is, be ashamed of doing them.



The limit for acquiring knowledge is death; do not stop until you die. Those who abandon the path of education because they have grown up are self-destructive in the extreme. Acquire as much knowledge as you can without disturbing your sense of contentment.

If you have been taught a craft without concern for your aptitudes, you will be troubled. For example, if you have an aptitude for tailoring and your father's occupation is farming, he will make you follow suit. This will result in your not doing anything well. The way out is to direct yourself to a particular craft as soon as you realize your aptitude for it, never mind what people say, and study that craft as well as you can. This will stand you in good stead later in life. Dear children, it is far more prestigious to earn your living cobbling shoes than to foment quarrels in your idle hours, or to bribe government officials to get your work done in order to amass wealth. Consider it your great good fortune that you know a good craft which will help you earn a living. Do not forget that artisans and farmers are the country's real benefactors, not those who hold salaried jobs and bow and scrape before their superiors to earn a living. No matter how wealthy you may be, it is essential that you know a good craft. And therefore it is important to learn a craft for which you have an aptitude.

The third calamity is bad company. If your friends are such that their company may get you bad habits, shun them at once. Even if they are your superiors in status and wealth, keep clear of them. Show your scorn for their bad conduct so that they too stop inviting you into their circle; whereas your good conduct will have a salutary effect on them. If you find yourselves among such people inadvertently, avoid drinking and misbehaving at their insistence. What is called moral courage has to be displayed on such occasions. Even if their group is large, show them they are up to no good. Perhaps they will scorn you; let them. The only straight solution is to stay clear of bad company.

If you marry young, there is only one way of finding happiness in the situation when you are older—by educating your wife. Inculcate in your wife a taste for reading books on morality. Keep your conduct pure, she will emulate it. If poverty prevents you marrying until adulthood, marry only when you have freed yourself of the first three calamities. It is better by far for a twenty-five-year-old man to remain single all his life than to marry an eight-year-old girl.

Children, there is no need to explain further what you should do for your children. If anyone asks me how family life should be managed, I would say it should be the way birds manage theirs. Birds live in a community as we do, but their nest has only the husband, wife, and their children. They do not all live together as we do—brothers, paternal cousins, their wives and children. In our India this detrimental practice of joint living has prevailed for years. The sooner it ends the better.

Among birds, both males and females know how to obtain subsistence; they nurture their young with love, they teach them to build nests and in turn obtain subsistence. They are not worried about the young earning a living. Children, how very beneficent is the way birds manage domestic life! Should one not say that domestic life has progressed further among birds than among us? Why then do we assert that, as human beings, we are the most superior of creatures?

Children, I feel like telling you so much more; but there is no time. I do not even have the time to correct what I have written; correct it yourselves before reading. I inadvertently omitted one last thing: help your parents in their old age to the best of your ability.

*My Views: Shaka 1821, Shravan Shuddha Navami,<sup>25</sup>  
14<sup>th</sup> August 1899*

I am no exception to the rule that a person's views change in keeping with his circumstances. Let me first write about my views today, to facilitate the task of tracing gradual changes in them for those who might subject them to close scrutiny.

*First, about religion:* Religion has a close connection with human life—closer than even politics can have. A foreign king may conquer a kingdom but not a religion. Even if one is required to change one's religion under duress, the seeds of religion that are deep-rooted in one's being take a long time to burn out. It is very difficult to express an opinion on such a vast subject; moreover, my pen lacks the capacity to

<sup>25</sup> The ninth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Shravan. The date also mentions the year according to Shalivahan Shaka, a calendar which starts in AD 78.

present all my thoughts on paper. This should suffice by way of a preface.

I have now become a complete Buddhist, at least in my mind. I like the views of Lord Buddha entirely. All who desire the welfare of the world, the nation, the family, and the self should take refuge in Sadguru [the great teacher] Buddha, and conduct himself in accordance with his advice, with implicit faith. This is my strong belief. And this day I pray with great humility to Buddha-guru, 'O Sadguru, grant me the status at least of the servant of your servant!'

*Society:* Caste discrimination should be totally eradicated; child marriage should be abolished soon; there will be little need to introduce widow remarriage once child marriage is abolished. But obstructing widow remarriage is in contravention of morality. Family life should be modelled on that of the birds. Parents should help their children to live separately once they grow up. This will put an end to unnecessary quarrels within the family.

*Government:* The system of democracy is good, next comes democratic monarchy, next in turn is indigenous monarchy; and the most inferior system is what prevails in India today. Every individual should exert himself to the utmost to bring into effect as superior a system [of government] as possible.

*What should an individual do?* [An individual should] be obedient to his parents as long as he is a minor. Later he should show them respect till the end, and not hurt them. One should discard without hesitation evil customs perpetuated by superstition. One should carry on one's occupation without hurting others. One should never be idle; there is no sin like idleness. One should not be a debtor; a debtor can achieve no self-advancement. Intoxicants lead to an individual's ruin. One should accept, when the opportunity arises, any task—political, religious, or generally benevolent—requiring less than one's capacity, so that one does not fail. One should take refuge in Sadguru Buddha and think upon his views. If one does not understand his views, one should have them explained by his wise devotees and then conduct oneself accordingly.

These extracts will help readers understand the direction of my thoughts before I left Goa for Pune. I could see my aim clearly, but not the path to reach it. Let me promise to recount in the next chapter the huge effort I had to make in order to find it, and take my leave now.

## 6. Sojourn in Punya-pattan<sup>26</sup>

*It is better by far to have strife with the virtuous, than ever to keep company with the wicked.*

When I left Madgaon, my heart was pervaded by dark black clouds of despair. My dejection did not diminish even at the sight of the scenic Dudhsagar Falls. The train moved slowly, the sheer green mountain around it came within sight. But I imagined that those mountains and the whole region below were looking dispiritedly at me. I said to myself:

Mother, Land of my birth! Here is your child, shunned by practically all his relatives and friends. My relatives gave me no shelter, but surely you will not fail to grant me refuge in some remote corner. But Mother, should an unfortunate child like me beg you for refuge? Many were the times I deserted you for selfish personal advantage; but Mother, my dreams were not fulfilled, and I have had to return with my face blackened, seeking shelter again with you. I have made a resolve that I will not show you my face if I do not succeed this time. Mother! I love you boundlessly. I am convinced that you will forgive me my offences, true to [your] epithet: 'all-enduring'. But do make sure I do not come again to seek your darshan if I do not succeed. Let not this resolve of mine waver.

The train reached Pune at about four in the morning of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1899. I hired a tonga to go to Raste's Peth.<sup>27</sup> After a long search I found the house of Shri Anant Ramkrishna Redkar. He welcomed me cordially. On the second or third day after this he took me to his neighbour, Shri Narayanrao Varde.<sup>28</sup> Redkar gave Narayanrao information

<sup>26</sup> 'Punya-pattan' is supposedly the old name for Pune.

<sup>27</sup> The tonga, a small one-horse carriage, was much seen in Pune until about 1950. The old part of Pune, the 'city' proper, is divided into peths or wards; the core peths are named after the seven days of the week, and the outlying ones after the peshwa's eminent sardars (such as Raste) or officials who settled them.

<sup>28</sup> Redkar, Varde, and Bhandarkar are Gaud Saraswat Brahmin names. The community originated in Goa, but some families had migrated to Maharashtra to acquire education and employment.

about me—that I had come from Goa, etc. Narayanrao said, ‘Why have you brought this rice-gruel-eating Goa-babu here? Of what use is he in Pune?’ Having said this, Narayanrao turned to me and said, ‘Don’t be angry at my words; it’s all been said in jest!’ I said, ‘There’s no reason whatsoever for me to be angry. People [eminent Goans] like Jivbadada Bakshi and Lakhbadada Lad also ate rice gruel.<sup>29</sup> You have perhaps forgotten these people in the company of Pune-ites, so you are perhaps fed up with rice gruel as well.’ At this reply, Narayanrao fell quiet. Later, I visited him a couple of times and his children asked me my name; I told them to inform Narayanrao that the gruel-eating Goa-babu had come to see him. The children repeated the words to him. Finally he said, one day, ‘Please don’t utter these words. You are using them almost to wreak vengeance. I beg your pardon if you took offence at being called a gruel-eater.’

My chief objective in coming to Pune was to earn a living by working as a clerk, or do some such job during the day and learn Sanskrit from *shastris*. I conveyed this objective to Redkar. He tried hard, directly and through others, to get me a job—but in vain. I frequented the office of *Sudharak* [started by Agarkar] and other such places, but without success. The question was: what to do now? Redkar said he knew people in the police department quite well, and would recommend me if I wanted a job there. But I felt a distaste for the police department. So I said it seemed better to starve than work for the police. Besides, working in that department would hardly have facilitated my desire for learning Sanskrit.

Within a week or so I learned that Dr Bhandarkar lived in Pune.<sup>30</sup> One afternoon I went to his bungalow, carrying a note. I do not remember the entire contents of the note, but it was probably to the

<sup>29</sup> Jivbadada Kerkar migrated from Goa and joined the Maratha army, rising to be a general or ‘Bakshi’ in Shinde’s army. He recruited many Saraswats from Goa, including Lakhbadada Lad, who also distinguished himself. Chandrakant Keni, *The Saraswats*, Vasco da Gama (Goa): V.M. Salgaocar Foundation, 2008, pp. 221–4. I thank S.R. Kakodkar for this reference.

<sup>30</sup> Dr (later Sir) Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar was a renowned Indologist and Professor of Sanskrit who taught at Mumbai’s Elphinstone College and Pune’s Deccan College for many years. He was an active social reformer and a founder-member of the Prarthana Samaj.

effect that I had come from Goa to study and wished for his darshan. I had ended it by citing verse 5, chapter 9, of the *Dnyaneshwari*:

*Lord, you are a deep pool of the nectar of happiness, where we obtain the coolness we desire. If we fear to show familiarity here, where can we attain calm?*

Dr Bhandarkar read the note and sent for me at once. He said, ‘You say you are from Goa, how then can you write such immaculate Marathi?’ I replied, ‘There are many in Goa who write as well as I do.’ I told him about magazines like *Pathya-bodh*, and about newspapers. He said, ‘We believed Goa to be a backward region. In fact, we didn’t think of it as part of Maharashtra at all. But, as you say, there seem to be several young people with potential there.’ I told him all about myself. Then he said, ‘It will take you seven years just to learn Sanskrit. After seven years you will become a pandit. If you don’t need to remit money home, you can get help here, enough for your studies. You don’t need to get a job for that purpose. Besides, it will be very difficult to hold a job and study simultaneously. We will give you a rupee or two every month, and there are many Saraswat gentlemen here from whom you will easily get a [total] subscription of five to six rupees.’ He had no time that day, so he asked me to visit him again and went back to his work. His encouraging words lifted my spirits and I turned towards Redkar’s house in a cheerful frame of mind.

The better I got to know Dr Bhandarkar, the more favourable was his opinion of me. Soon he gave me a note and his own [*Siddhanta Kaumudi*], and sent me to the Sanskrit school in Nagarkar’s *wada*.<sup>31</sup> The head teacher there, Vasudev-shastri Abhyankar, placed me in the charge of Mahadev-shastri Joshi. Under him I started studying *Kaumudi*. Even after two months though, I could not understand it; but I never felt discouraged. And I did begin to understand [Kalidasa’s] *Raghuvamsha* fairly well.

<sup>31</sup> *Siddhanta Kaumudi* is a critical and scholarly work on the Sutras of Panini the grammarian, and thus a standard work on Sanskrit grammar. ‘Sanskrit school’ is a translation of ‘*pathashala*’, the traditional school, often for the study of religion. A *wada* is a traditional mansion with rooms built around a central open square; a large *wada* has more than one such square.

Redkar had arranged for my meals at a public eating-house in Budhwar Peth. Initially the owner was hesitant and said, 'You are a Saraswat, so you will have to smear cowdung yourself [and cleanse the part of the floor where you have eaten].' But on the promise of a few more annas he agreed to do all this himself.<sup>32</sup> For a couple of weeks my daily routine was to eat at this public eating-house and go to Redkar's house at night for shelter. But I could not continue this long because the school was too far. So Dr Bhandarkar arranged for me to stay at the Prarthana Samaj [also in Budhwar Peth]. I stayed there and continued my studies at the school.

During my stay at the Prarthana Samaj I made many new acquaintances. Among them was the late Shri Madhavrao Lotlikar, whom I got to know well; I also went to his house for a meal a couple of times. There I met the late Shri Kashinath Raghunath Mitra who had come to Pune for a change of air. Some days we took early morning walks together. One day, the subject of the Buddha came up and he recommended that I read Shri Govind Narayan Kane's *Jagadguru Gautama Buddhache Charitra* [The Life of Gautama Buddha, Teacher of the World]. He did not own a copy, but I acquired it through him and read it. This work is a translation of Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*. The original is in verse, so the translation is not entirely reliable. But it has been written with such a feeling of love that the reader cannot help but be engrossed in it. More than fifty editions of the book have been published in England and America. Kane's translation is not as good as the [English] original, but I liked it so much at the time that I read some portions over and over again. It became for me an original religious text at the time. I have still not forgotten how, while reading certain portions of it, my throat would constrict and tears would stream down my face. I got into the habit of studying this book whenever I was dispirited.

The expense on clothes and meals exhausted all my savings. Dr Lad sent Rs 10, on which I barely managed the month of February. What was I to do next? Dr Bhandarkar had said he would arrange something or the other, but nothing was quite definite. I was convinced that there

<sup>32</sup> A rupee was at this point in time divided into 16 annas, an anna into 4 paisas, and a paisa into 3 *pais*.

was no option now but to get matters clarified, and I decided to ask him about it quite candidly. But he fell ill in February, so I shied away from broaching the subject. However, I must have mentioned it indirectly when he recovered. I went to see him at his house on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1900. Sometimes he would invite me to a meal, but I rarely accepted because his bungalow was very far from the city. Once in a while I would have dinner with him, sleep over at his house, and return to the city the next morning. On the occasion mentioned above, I stayed the night at his house.

The next morning I broached the subject of my future subsistence. He said that if I was prepared to become a member of the Prarthana Samaj, he would help me through the Samaj; otherwise he could not help at all. I had told him at the outset that I wished to study Buddhism. One day, while we were in his carriage, he said to his oldest son (the late Shridharpanth Bhandarkar), referring to me, 'He wants to become a Buddha.' I replied, 'How would I have the capacity to become a Buddha? It would be difficult for me even to be counted among the disciples of one such as yourself.' This conversation created a misunderstanding in us both.<sup>33</sup> I believed he would provide me generous assistance to study Buddhism. He thought I was prepared to become his disciple, that is, a member of the Prarthana Samaj. But that was not what I meant. My words were meant literally: in my present circumstances it was not possible for me to become a Buddha or even the Buddha's disciple. What I meant to say by this was that it would be more than enough if I acquired a little knowledge of Sanskrit and was counted among his students; no connection with the Prarthana Samaj was intended. Whatever the case, the fact is he misunderstood me. He said, 'I had thought until now that you would join the Prarthana Samaj. I wanted to help you and ask you to serve as a Prarthana Samaj missionary later.'

I said, 'I agree with most of the beliefs of the Prarthana Samaj. I do not accept caste discrimination. I have long been convinced that child marriage is bad. But I do not wish to join any society until I have acquired a complete knowledge of Buddhism. At least at the present, I

<sup>33</sup> The misunderstanding possibly arose from the word 'Buddha' (the enlightened one) used by Dr Bhandarkar, instead of 'Bauddha' (a Buddhist).

believe that Buddhism alone is the true means for the advancement of mankind.'

'What is the basis for your opinion? What do you know about Buddhism?'

'I have read *The Life of Jagadguru Buddha*. That has made me believe that the Buddha's views and his religion as a whole will be beneficial to mankind.'

'Oh, I know that book by Kane! It is the translation of an English book. The English book does not express even a quarter of the original, and not a quarter of the English book is expressed in the Marathi! And you have formed your opinions about Buddhism on the basis of such a book!'

'I admit that I know nothing about Buddhism. But if the Marathi account—which according to you contains only one-sixteenth of the original—is so gripping, one can only imagine how good the original must be. Therefore my resolve to study the original texts is all the firmer.'

'But what use is Buddhism to our country? Also, it is difficult to acquire knowledge about Buddhism in this country. You would have to go to Nepal or Ceylon.'

'It may or may not be of use to the country; but I am convinced that it will be useful to me. I am prepared to go to Nepal or Ceylon.'

'But you would have to become a monk there.'

'I am not worried about the hardships I may have to bear. I consider it my life's goal to acquire knowledge of Buddhism.'

The conversation continued much longer, but it was not very fruitful. We could not convince each other. Now it was beyond doubt that there was no point in my staying on in Pune. But the question was where to go—Ceylon or Nepal? Everything in Ceylon—the language, the customs—would be strange. Besides, I knew nothing about southern languages such as Kannada. So, even the idea of going to Ceylon seemed impossible. It was not any less difficult to get to Nepal. I did not know the language of North India, but it could be acquired through effort. Besides, there were Maharashtrian settlements all the way up to Kashi. This meant that the language would not be a problem—at least up to that point. With such thoughts in mind, I decided to go north. I returned Dr Bhandarkar's *Kaumudi*. I kept only a

reasonable amount of clothing and gave the rest to the Prarthana Samaj peon Balwantrao Pawar. I borrowed Rs 12 from Shri Redkar. I donned the two pieces of clothing which had been dyed yellow—with Balwantrao Pawar's help—and discarded my tuft of hair as well as my sacred thread; and on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1900, Krishna 15 of Magh, Shaka 1821, I left Pune after midnight.<sup>34</sup>

Although arrangements could not be made for my studies at Pune, I had derived many advantages from my stay there. I had acquired the courage to take on further travel. I came into contact with many people, which helped me to understand Marathi speech and customs quite well. I really liked some of the preaching at prayer meetings in the Prarthana Samaj. There was a secretary of the Prarthana Samaj, Shri Krishnarao Godbole by name, who had passed away before I reached Pune. His first death anniversary was in January or February 1900. On that occasion, Dr Bhandarkar held a prayer meeting at his own house, which I attended. On that occasion Dr Bhandarkar selected as the text for his sermon two sets of verses by Tukaram-buva. These verses were to serve me as a guide in very trying circumstances. Hearing the sermon was of tremendous advantage to me. I do not remember the sermon, but only the verses, which are as follows:

*Every single moment one should think about crossing the sea of worldly life. This perishable physical body is bound to go because Time devours life. One should develop a liking for the company of saints and make haste to acquire otherworldly concerns. Tukā says that one's eyes should not be clouded by smoke while dealing with the concerns of this world.*

*One should first achieve one's own welfare in the light of one's intellect, and not turn back to look for help from another. One should proceed on the strength of one's own ability and not yearn for others. Tukā says that one should abandon all bodily desire and delve deep into the essence of the Brahma.*

<sup>34</sup> The tonsured head with a round patch of short hair at the centre, and a longish tuft ('*shikha*' in Sanskrit, '*shendi*' in Marathi) at its centre, as well as the sacred thread were indications of a man's Brahmin status. The date according to the Hindu calendar is the fifteenth day of the dark fortnight (i.e. *amavasya*) in the month of Magh.

### 7. From Pune to Gwalior

I said in the last chapter that the day I left Pune was *amavasya*. At about midnight I left the Prarthana Samaj to go to the station to catch a train going to Daund-Manmad. My mind was filled with the darkness of despair. But the sky was cloudless, and occasionally a hopeful thought flashed in my mind like the stars that twinkled in the night sky. I was aware that I had embarked upon a terrible venture. I also knew that success would be very difficult. But then I felt that if I exerted myself with resolve, I could acquire at least a little knowledge of the Buddha's religion in my life. In any case, I had undertaken this risky venture not for selfish reasons—it was not like the ventures of thieves and robbers—and derived a good deal of solace from that thought. If this effort led not to success but to death, it would not matter, because I could then claim that I had done whatever I could—that I had fulfilled my duty. I also thought this would bring me a kind of peace at the time of death.

After we passed Daund, I met in the train some students bound for Indore; and they looked after me right up to Indore. They stayed at a public eating-house at Indore, and so did I. My savings were exhausted in a couple of days. The time had now come to actually beg for food. But who would give me food in an unfamiliar place such as this? I tried at a couple of places, but without success. In the end I went to the house of a [Saraswat] high official there, named Wagle. It was morning time, and the great personage was sitting in his drawing room, wearing a cotton-wool vest and smoking a hookah. I was familiar with the *gud-gudi*, but had never seen the hookah apparatus. No wonder then that I was taken aback for a moment at the sight of its components—a bowl the size of a cup, the long pipe sprawling on the floor in coils like a snake, the silver mouthpiece. But without wasting too much time studying the apparatus, I begged Raosaheb's help. But Raosaheb was busy with his hookah; and in the middle of it all a clerk brought in some office work. Needless to say, he had no time to talk to me. He called for another clerk and told him to give me four annas—whether they were of the Holkar mint or British I do not recall. In a way I was delighted that Raosaheb had given me four annas without making any inquiries, because it eliminated the need to answer undesirable questions,

such as 'Where have you come from; where are you going; what is your caste; are you married or not?'

The train fare from Indore to Ujjain was about six or seven annas. I paid for the ticket with Wagle-saheb's four annas, and some annas that I had. I reached Ujjain in the evening. Where to stay was the question. In the belief that I was a pilgrim, some local people directed me to the house of a priest named Ram-bhat. Traversing narrow lanes, I somehow managed to trace out Ram-bhat's house. Bhatji was not at home, but no one prevented me from laying down my meagre belongings there. The city lacked piped water, and the displeasure of the Rain-god had caused its river to run dry. Some water remained in the occasional puddle, but it was dirty and some variety of insects could clearly be seen floating around. I washed my hands and feet in the river, but worried about drinking that water. I asked a couple of people whether there was any other drinking water, but receiving a reply in the negative I had no recourse but to strain the same water with a thin cloth and drink it. The result was I could not sleep that night and had to visit the toilet a dozen times. The next day a Dravidian student staying with Ram-bhatji asked me whether I wanted to accompany him to beg for food. I replied that I could not because of my ill health. So he visited a few more houses and collected enough food for two. But I was unable to eat much that day. At his insistence I ate a chapati or two and a little rice. Now the toilet visits increased in frequency. I began to wonder whether I was going to die of cholera then and there.

There was a small clinic adjacent to Ram-bhatji's house, with a doctor named Joglekar. I consulted him, and his medicine brought a good deal of relief; but clean water was still not available. Joglekar mentioned my name to Shri Kelkar, a teacher in Madhav School. In the evening he met me in the street and asked whether I was the fellow who had consulted Joglekar that morning. When I answered in the affirmative, he said, 'You will be very uncomfortable at Ram-bhatji's house. Come to my house tomorrow.' I was very happy to accept his invitation. All the arrangements were excellent at Kelkar's house. Besides, he brought drinking water from a clean well. As a result, my health began to improve in a couple of days.

Kelkar introduced me to some professors in Madhav College. They all collected a subscription and arranged for my ticket to Gwalior as

well as my travelling expenses. I started from Ujjain and stopped over at Jhansi for a couple of days. At Jhansi station I met a cart driver of the Karhade Brahmin caste, who took me in his cart to his house.<sup>35</sup> He arranged for my meals with a widow staying in his house by agreeing upon a payment. The diarrhoea that had begun in Ujjain recurred here and exhausted me. I was not even able to see the town of Jhansi properly. I left Jhansi and reached Gwalior about the 12<sup>th</sup> of March. There I stayed first with Dr Lele. The next day I visited Dr Dwarkanath Shankar Wagle. He was not very hospitable at first, but upon learning that I was a Saraswat Brahmin he insisted on my staying with him. But he had limited space and the women in his family were secluded, in keeping with North Indian custom. So I told him I would prefer independent accommodation. He arranged for a room in the rear of a Sardar's bungalow adjacent to his house. Here I spent six months.

I was ill when I arrived at Gwalior. Dr Wagle's medicine cured me within a week. Then I told him that my plan was to go to Kashi. He said, 'This is summer, you will suffer unnecessarily. Go once the summer is over.' I saw the truth of this. The Gwalior summer is quite strange. It is impossible to step out after noon. At night there is often a breeze so hot that it nearly burns the body, and one cannot sleep. This air made me very feverish once; I had to rest in bed for a couple of days. Dr Wagle's medicine cured the fever and restored me to health.

I was so addicted to smoking bidis that I could not give them up despite trying hard. I had given up the *gudgudi* in Goa but had begun smoking bidis instead. Bidis were available in Gwalior, but Dr Wagle smoked cigarettes. Gradually, I reduced my addiction to smoking and kept it at three cigarettes a day. But I became restless if I did not get those three. Dr Wagle sometimes advised me to give up smoking, but I just could not. However, when I ran a fever because of the extreme heat, I lost all sense of taste and went off both bidis and cigarettes. Convinced that this was the opportunity to get rid of the addiction,

<sup>35</sup> The main Brahmin subcastes in Maharashtra are Chitpavan or Konkanastha, Karhade, and Saraswat (all originally from the Konkan coast), and Deshastha (from the Deccan plateau). Irawati Karve, *Maharashtra: Land and Its People*, Bombay: Maharashtra State, 1968 (Maharashtra State Gazetteer), p. 18.

I resolved not to smoke even after regaining my sense of taste. During the week that followed, I was afraid I would break my resolve; but happily I did not. It is not that I have not touched a bidi or cigarette during the last dozen years; on occasion I have smoked a cigarette or cheroot in Ceylon or Burma. But I never again acquired the addiction to tobacco that I got rid of in Gwalior.

My only responsibility in Gwalior was to eat at Dr Wagle's house and sit around in my room. But I always detested such idleness. I read most of Moropant's poems published in his *Kavya-sangraha*. A graduate teacher would come to Dr Wagle's house, to teach his nephew, and he studied Sanskrit by himself, at home. I got him to explain some verses from [the great poet Bharavi's] *Kiratarjuniya*, and committed them to memory. I went to the college in Gwalior and requested the *shastri* there to teach me Sanskrit, but he refused. However, I did not fail to do whatever I could by myself.

Whenever I broached the subject of going to Kashi, Dr Wagle responded by getting me to postpone it. Finally he said, one day, 'Look, I think of you as my younger brother. I do not at all approve of your wasting your life travelling about in this fashion. You have mastery over Marathi; if I try, you'd easily get a job here with a starting salary of 25 to 30 rupees.<sup>36</sup> And considering that you're intelligent and honest, you will rise to 200 to 250 rupees within about six years.' He cited the example of many who had risen in this fashion merely on the strength of their Marathi. But his words had no effect on me, other than making me marvel at Dr Wagle assessing my value at between 25 and Rs 200 rupees a month after knowing me for six months! I told him candidly: 'My efforts are directed not at earning money, but at gaining fulfilment. I have not renounced my home and my homeland to earn money.' But he could not see my point. He said: 'Your food intake shows that your health has always been poor. Here you have me to take care of you. But who will look after you in a place of pilgrimage like Kashi? Now, if you are doubtful about getting a job, I will sign a contract on stamp paper to say that you will get 30 rupees every month out of my own salary, until you do get a job.' I expressed my thanks for this generosity and

<sup>36</sup> Gwalior city, being the capital of the Maratha princely state of Shinde (Scindia), placed a premium on Marathi.



said: 'I am grateful to you. These last six months you have truly treated me like a brother; and the same love is evident now. But is it not your duty to fulfil the intellectual curiosity of your younger brother? Do you think it fair that I live out my life as a clerk in Shinde's regime? As long as you are here, getting a clerk's job will be no problem for me. But would it not suppress my burning desire to learn Sanskrit if I were to become a clerk here? If you want to help me, help my education. I don't need your help in any other way.' He did not like my words. He tried to dissuade me through a friend of his, by the name of Malap, who belonged to the Maratha caste. But it was beyond anybody to dissuade me. Finally, he reluctantly gave me permission to go to Kashi, promised to help my education directly or through others, and also told me to return to Gwalior if proper arrangements could not be made at Kashi.

There was a student from Tanjore, B. Narayanrao by name, who was studying for the LJB at Gwalior at this time. I got to know him quite well, because he visited Dr Wagle frequently. He was somewhat impulsive but very straightforward, which is why we became friends. He promised to send me three rupees every month after I left for Kashi, and even gave me three rupees in advance. Dr Wagle gave 20 rupees for my expenses, and his friend Shri Malap gave me one rupee. In addition, Dr Wagle gave me a thick coat for the cold season, which served me very well for two winters. It was not possible [for me] to live like a renunciant at Kashi, for fear that the *shastris* there might refuse to teach me, just as the *shastris* at Gwalior had done. Therefore, in consultation with B. Narayanrao, I decided to don my sacred thread again and become a Brahmin. But what about my tonsured tuft of hair? I had severed my connection with it, and with Pune, at the same time! But Narayanrao solved this problem as well. My hair had grown more than an inch. It was decided that on the way I should stop at Prayag [i.e. Allahabad] and get tonsured, saving some hair—enough to grow a tuft—in the middle of the head. Narayanrao bought a couple of sacred threads and gave them to me just as I was leaving for the station. He came to see me off. Dr Wagle had lent me his tonga. The horse started in alarm when our journey began; another man in my place would have turned back at the inauspicious sign. But I was not unnerved. Luckily, Narayanrao did not believe in auspicious signs either. The

horse calmed down and we reached Gwalior station safely. I took my leave of B. Narayanrao and a couple of other gentlemen, and took my seat in the train. I remember this was on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 1900.

### 8. Pilgrimage to Kashi

Starting from Gwalior, I reached Prayag the next day. There I stayed with a southern priest.<sup>37</sup> This bhatji was good natured and promised to complete the pilgrimage rituals for a rupee and a quarter. The tonsuring was the main ritual. The next day I went with him to the Sangam.<sup>38</sup> The priest put me in touch with a barber and asked me to get myself tonsured. Having spent six months in Gwalior, I could speak some Hindustani. I talked to the barber in this language and strictly enjoined him to save a tuft of hair, about four inches in diameter, at the centre of my head. But he did not understand me because 'tuft' was denoted by a different Hindi word. He proceeded to cut a couple of swathes in the middle of my head with his country razor. I reminded him again, because I was suspicious, but he assured me that all was well. However, his work made the tuft nominal: this 'skilled' barber completed his handiwork, leaving me with a tuft at most half an inch in diameter, and even that off-centre! I did not bother further with the required remaining rituals, such as offering *pinda*.<sup>39</sup> The priest took care of all that against the money I had paid him.

On 20<sup>th</sup> September 1900 I left Prayag and reached Kashi station at 10:30 in the night. As I disembarked a Konkanaatha Brahmin named Sakharam-bhat said I could go to his place and he would make all the necessary arrangements. Just then another Sakharam-bhat turned up, dark-skinned and somewhat short, and he said: 'Your forefathers came to my house when they visited Kashi. Why do you want to be lured by this rogue now?' A terrible quarrel ensued between the dark-skinned Sakharam-bhat and the fair-skinned one. I tried to calm them down, saying, 'Why quarrel? Whoever has documents relating to my forefathers

<sup>37</sup> The word 'southern' (*Dakshini* or *Daakshinaatya*) generally indicates people originally from Maharashtra or the region to its south.

<sup>38</sup> Sangam: the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna at Prayag (now Allahabad).

<sup>39</sup> *Pinda*: oblation to departed ancestors.

should produce them, and I will be with him tomorrow. For now I will stay with this (fair-skinned) Sakharam-bhatji, because I met him first.' I left the station with the fair-skinned Sakharam-bhatji. The dark-skinned Sakharam-bhatji shouted after us: 'Yes, go with him! The rogue will rob you of everything and murder you. Beware!' I said: 'I have nothing worth robbing; and I am not at all afraid of being murdered.' The fair-skinned Sakharam-bhatji and I spent that night in a small room near the station. There were a couple of other people as well; but not even the suspicion of being murdered touched me, and I slept soundly.

Sakharam-bhatji woke me up at dawn the next day, and we went to his house in an *ekka*.<sup>40</sup> Bhatji had a mistress at home; she was probably a Shudra by caste. He had to look after her and her three children, that is to say, even cook for them. Bhatji paid the *ekka*. When the woman opened the door, he gave me a room on the upper floor as my lodgings. I washed my hands, feet, and face, and got ready. Bhatji arrived with a list and gave me details of all types of pilgrimages—from the circuit of hallowed spots around Kashi to a funeral ceremony costing about five rupees. I said, 'I'm in no hurry to perform these rituals. I've come to stay for a year or more, so the rituals can be performed at my convenience. For the present I have to find a teacher and begin my studies, and arrange for my meals.' When he was convinced he could make no money out of me, Sakharam-bhatji said, 'You are a Shenvi, so you will surely get shelter in the *math* reserved for Shenvis.'<sup>41</sup> Kashi has three *maths* for Saraswats, but Bhatji knew only of the one at Durga Ghat and asked me to proceed there.

After lunch I got on my way. It was drizzling. While inquiring about the location of Durga Ghat I met a Brahmin who had his meals at an *anna-chhatra*.<sup>42</sup> He said he was on his way there and I could accompany him. I was led through some very narrow lanes—of which there are very many in Kashi—and began to suspect he was leading me to a deserted place to rob me! Some of the patches were so dark that it felt

<sup>40</sup> *Ekka*: a small tonga.

<sup>41</sup> A *math* in this case is a rest-house for holy men and students of religion. 'Shenvi' means Saraswat.

<sup>42</sup> *Anna-chhatra*: a place providing free meals to Brahmins.

as if we were walking through a really deep mine! I had with me only an anna or two, the rest being in a pouch in Sakharambhatji's house; remembering this I lost all fear. No matter where my friend—this frequenter of the *anna-chhatra*—took me, he could get nothing out of me; with this in mind I walked peacefully forward. At last we reached Durga Ghat; he indicated where the Shenvi *math* was and turned off in another direction.

Here, in the Shenvi *math*, I found an elderly gentleman named Shri Govindrao Palekar. I had heard of his son, Shri Vaman Govind Palekar, a renowned lawyer in Belgaum. Vamanrao had passed away, so Govindrao was required to attend the court at Kashi, in connection with some domestic matter. It being impossible for him to walk the distance, he had been carried there in a litter. On his way back he was drenched by rain and came down with dysentery. When I arrived at the *math* he was quite ill; even so, he spoke very affectionately with me and insisted on my sharing his room. Having walked through extremely narrow lanes, I experienced a feeling of contentment upon arriving there. The Shenvi *math* was right against the Ganga's bank, so the current of the river and the scenic area around could be clearly seen from Govindrao's room. It was no wonder that I was so immensely cheered by the sight, and by Govindrao's words of encouragement.

That same evening I brought my belongings from Sakharambhatji's house and moved into the Shenvi *math*. An elderly Saraswat widow from Cochin named Kashibai also lived in the *math*. She cooked for Govindrao. Next day, Govindrao gave her rations from his own stock and arranged for my meals. Being ill, he himself was fasting. Kashibai was quite amazed at the sight of my tuft of hair—half an inch in diameter and one inch long! I suspect she even complained about it to Govindrao. But, aware of the doings of reformers of the new generation, he probably reasoned with her by saying: 'He is young, he must have emulated his peers, cut off his tuft, and let his hair grow. So what? By itself that does not make him a non-Brahmin. Many people allow their hair to grow nowadays. He has mentioned many Saraswats of Belgaum with whom he is acquainted, which means he is certainly a Saraswat.' But she was not quite satisfied. She would serve my food outside and not let me touch her cooking pots. The only consolation was she was not suspicious of my sacred thread—it being brand new!

A water tap was located close to the Shenvi *math*. But drinking tap water being proscribed by religion, Ganga water was drunk at Govindrao's place. I experienced the power of this water the very first day: my sleep was ruined the whole night, I was in the toilet half a dozen times. From the day following I began carrying an empty water-pot while returning from my bath in the Ganga and filling it at the tap when no Brahmin was in sight. If the lady had discovered my preference for tap water, it would have been hard for me to get any food! I had to exercise extreme caution to keep it a secret. I planned my stay at Kashi in consultation with Govindrao. He said it was possible to get free food at an *anna-chhatra*, but that that would require a letter of recommendation from a high official at Gwalior. He also suggested that I should study with Veda-shastra-sampanna Gangadhar-shastri Telang.<sup>43</sup> If I describe my entire stay in Kashi, planned with his counsel, this chapter will grow too long. So I must take leave of my readers here.

### 9. Sojourn in Kashi

There are numerous *anna-chhatras* in Kashi, big and small. Of these, only two have an open-door policy: one established by some merchants of Madras, the other by Shrimant Jayajirao Shinde Maharaj [or H.H. the Maharaja Scindia]. When Shrimant Jayajirao Shinde went to Kashi, he had intended to gift every Brahmin who was a family man a *dakshina* of 100 rupees.<sup>44</sup> But the pandits of Kashi did not approve of the same *dakshina* being given to a Vedic scholar versed in the ten sacred texts and a pandit conversant with the six shastras on the one hand, and an illiterate Brahmin on the other.<sup>45</sup> Angered by this, Shrimant Jayajirao said: 'If this idea does not meet with unanimous approval, I will throw these six lakh rupees, set aside for *dakshina*, into the Ganga!' Some wise mediators then counselled Shrimant Jayajirao by suggesting that the money, instead of being thrown into the Ganga, be utilized to set up a free dining centre. Agreeing with this, Shrimant Jayajirao arranged for a transfer of the Peshwas' Balaji temple from the

<sup>43</sup> The title means 'learned in the Vedas and *shastras*'.

<sup>44</sup> Shrimant (comparable to H.H.) is the title by which all Maratha rulers were addressed. *Dakshina* is the money gifted to Brahmins as a ritual donation.

<sup>45</sup> The ten sacred texts are the four Vedas and the six shastras.

British government to himself, and opened an *anna-chhatra* there. Now it is known as 'Balaji's *anna-chhatra*'.

Saraswats are allowed in Balaji's *anna-chhatra*, but only by permission of senior officials. Even if this permission is obtained, Saraswats are served food in the second batch of diners.<sup>46</sup> Lacking an alternative, I would be compelled to eat thus. Govindrao Palekar told me to get a letter from Gwalior, addressed to the official here, to improve my meal arrangements. I wrote to Dr Wagle; but instead of replying himself he made Shri Malap write to me to say I had no need to go to Balaji's *anna-chhatra*; that Dr Wagle would contact Raoraje Raghunathrao Rajwade and arrange for me to have my meals at his *anna-chhatra*. Raoraje Raghunathrao's father Dinkarrao had opened an *anna-chhatra* for fifteen Brahmins somewhere at Brahma Ghat. Had I been accommodated there, I would have been spared a great deal of trouble. But Dr Wagle was shy; not only did he not contact Raoraje, he did not even help me get into Balaji's *anna-chhatra* by writing a note. I waited in vain for his letter.

It was easier to arrange for my education. One may approach any pandit in Kashi, and he teaches one free of charge. But I resolved to study only with the renowned Veda-shastra-sampanna Gangadhar-shastri, in keeping with Tukoba's words: '*It is best that one ties [bullocks] to the yoke properly.*' Govindrao also approved of this. One afternoon, I started out in search of Gangadhar-shastri's house and almost reached it after some wandering. A member of the Sardar family of Jamkhindi, who was known as Babasaheb, had lived in Kashi for almost twelve years. He had studied the shastras with Gangadhar-shastri. That day, he had just had a lesson on Mimamsa Shastra and left his guru's house to return to his own.<sup>47</sup> The two of us met in the street. I asked him whether Gangadhar-shastri's house lay in that direction, and he asked me why I wanted to know.

<sup>46</sup> The word for a 'batch of diners' is *pankti*.

<sup>47</sup> Mimamsa is one of the six shastras or chief schools of Indian philosophy known as 'orthodox', i.e. those that accept the authority of the Vedas. These six are: Mimamsa (which emphasizes the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas), Vedanta (which emphasizes the speculative aspect of the Vedas), and Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, and Vaisheshika (the last four are not directly based on the Vedic texts). The 'heterodox' schools (which do not accept the authority of the Vedas) include Materialism (of Charvaka, for example), Buddhism, and

'I want to learn Sanskrit.'

'How far have you studied?'

'I know a couple of cantos of *Raghuvamsha*, but nothing more. Now I am going to start on *Kaumudi*.'

At this, Babasaheb said, surprised: 'What's the use of your studying the shastras at this age? You must be almost twenty-five. If you start on *Kaumudi* now, what use will it be to you? If instead you get a job in the railways or some such, *that* would be useful. Why pursue such study to no useful end? I have experience of this, which is why I am giving you this advice. Have you any idea how many years it takes, on average, to study just one shastra?'

'How many?'

'It takes twelve years to study a single shastra. Twelve years! Are you prepared to stay here that long?'

'Oh, twelve years isn't too long; even twenty or twenty-five years don't matter. I've resolved to acquire a good knowledge of Sanskrit.'

Babasaheb's astonishment seemed to double. He said, 'Do you know what you're saying? Twenty years? What use will your education be to you in twenty years?'

I said, laughing, 'Look, you're a Hindu, which means you believe in rebirth; don't you?'

'Without a doubt I believe in rebirth! But what has that to do with anything?'

'My efforts are not aimed at obtaining results in this life; I will get them in my next life. That will facilitate my study of the shastras in my next life. Don't you agree?'

Babasaheb looked stunned and said, 'If that's your firm belief, go ahead and make the effort. That house you can see over there is Gangadhar-shastri's.' And he left.

After passing a few houses I saw a gentleman leaning against a bolster at a window. (In Kashi the windows reach the floor, as in old-style houses in Pune.) His sacred thread led me to surmise that he was a Brahmin. But his short stature and dark face suggested an origin in

the Telangana region. Then again, I could not see a connection between his dirty-looking *panchaa* from Shahapur and his reclining against a bolster.<sup>48</sup> This bhatji could not be poor, because he was reclining against a bolster! If he was rich, why was he wearing such a dirty *panchaa*? In any case, why should I hesitate to ask for Gangadhar-shastri's house? If the bhatji knew Marathi, he would answer; else I would inquire at the next house. With this thought, I asked him whether he knew Gangadhar-shastri Telang's house.

'What do you want with him?'

'I want to meet him.'

'Then come inside', he said.

Inside I saw some grey-haired students sitting opposite him, their manuscript texts unwrapped.<sup>49</sup> This almost convinced me that this was Gangadhar-shastri himself. I did namaskar and sat to one side.

He asked, 'What do you want?'

'I want to study the shastras, which is why I have come to you.'

'But which shastra do you want to study—Nyaya or Vyakarana?'<sup>50</sup>

'Nyaya Shastra in particular; but first I also wish to know Vyakarana.'

'If you wish to study Nyaya, I can put you in touch with an excellent pandit. Being a Vyakarana specialist myself, I do not know Nyaya Shastra sufficiently.'

'Whatever you know is ample for me, because I am only a beginner learning the Sanskrit *Rupavali*.'<sup>51</sup>

'Come and see me once more so that we can discuss your studies. For the time being, see to your eating and other arrangements.' With these words he said farewell. On this same occasion, I became acquainted with his oldest son Dhundiraj-shastri.

<sup>48</sup> A *panchaa* is a short piece of white cloth, wrapped around the waist by men like a *lungi*; it is a much humbler lower garment than a *dhota* which reaches down to the ankles and is passed between the legs and tucked in at the waist in the back. Shahapur was a famous weaving centre.

<sup>49</sup> The word used for manuscript texts here is *pothis*.

<sup>50</sup> Nyaya Shastra, being logical in its argument, forms the basis of many other shastras. The choice offered here is thus between Sanskrit logic and grammar (Vyakarana). I wish to thank Shri Shrinand Bapat of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute for this clarification.

<sup>51</sup> *Rupavali*: a beginner's manual of Sanskrit nominal declensions.

I was anxious about my eating arrangements. I wrote once again to Dr Wagle and awaited his reply. Just then Govindrao Palekar's illness worsened. In accordance with his wishes, I sent a telegram to his grandson. Within about four days his grandson arrived in Kashi, in the company of a friend named Paradkar. On the second or third day after their arrival, Govindrao left this mortal world. I had to go with his funeral procession. Unhealthy things on the occasion, like an untimely meal and a bath in the river, resulted in my immediately running up a high fever. In the end I got Paradkar to arrange for a litter and made it to the hospital in Kashi.

The hospitals in this region are real specimens! My mattress was riddled with hollows! On the bed next to mine lay a young man suffering from gonorrhoea in a half-naked state. The whole scene created within me a terrible distaste for the hospital. But what to do? I was compelled to lie there about four days. The only consolation was that Dhundiraj-shastri and Paradkar visited me once a day to inquire after my health. The meal arrangements do not deserve a mention! They would serve a sweet, liquid preparation [*khir*] made of sago, but with jaggery instead of sugar. Then again, no one got more than a small bowlful. Rice and dal would be served; but the rice was of such poor quality that it would not properly cook. I had once seen the way patients were looked after at Pune's Sassoon Hospital. Those arrangements and the ones at Kashi were poles apart! Be that as it may, I had experience of this hospital in Kashi for four days, took my leave of the doctors, and returned to the Shenvi *math* at Durga Ghat.

Govindrao Palekar's grandson, Paradkar, and others were happy at my return. At this time the administration of the *math* was in the hands of a Konkanastha Brahmin named Chidambar Godbole. As long as Govindrao was alive, this gentleman kept clear of him. Govindrao would say to me, 'Beware, this Chidambar is quite a thief. He will steal your belongings.' But after Govindrao's death, Chidambar made a long list and claimed that Govindrao owed him up to Rs 200. He started nagging Govindrao's grandson through one Pashupati-shastri there. The day after my return from the hospital, Pashupati-shastri again broached the topic on Chidambar's behalf. Chidambar too was present. Govindrao's grandson explained the whole matter to me. So I said to Chidambar, 'Look, you claim that Govindrao owed you this

amount. But you never mentioned this even once while he was alive. Moreover, you never even paid him a visit!' Chidambar was abashed and said, 'Have I made a false list then?' But he picked up his satchel and left. He never again broached the topic with Govindrao's grandson; but he was very angry with me.

After completing all the funeral rituals for Govindrao, his grandson (Shri Moreshwar Vaman Palekar) and Paradkar returned home. Here, I still lacked adequate eating arrangements. I was convinced that it was meaningless to wait any longer for Dr Wagle's letter. One day, I went and met the officials at Balaji's *anna-chhatra*. 'I am a Saraswat or Shenvi. But I am a student, and my studies would go well if I were allowed to have meals in your *anna-chhatra*.' He asked my name. When I told him, he said again, 'Look, I have been waiting for you more than ten days. A letter about you has arrived from Gwalior. But where could I find you without your address? Be that as it may. Come to the *chhatra* tomorrow afternoon so that I instruct the manager regarding your meals. But you will be served in the second batch of diners, that's beyond my control. It is the practice here to serve people of castes like the Shenvis in the second batch.'

The following day that senior official arranged everything for me. From that time, I was able to get my meals at the Balaji *chhatra*, in the second batch. But I could not guess the identity of the Gwalior letter-writer. Finally, it all became clear from a letter by Shri Malap. Malap stayed with Sardar Shitole, brother-in-law of the present Maharaja of Gwalior. Realizing my problem, he had a note sent from the administrative officer of Sardar Shitole directly to the official at the *chhatra*, who treated me with such respect for this reason. Sardar Shitole's administrative officer was not a great man; he earned a monthly salary of only Rs 30 or 40. But his status was high in the books of the *chhatra* official. In any case, I was relieved now that the meals had been arranged.

At this *chhatra* there were half a dozen persons who ate in the second batch; the *chhatra* officials could easily have accommodated them in the first batch. But that would have offended the southern Brahmins [of a higher subcaste]. This fear prevented the officials from allowing anyone other than southern Brahmins to eat in the first batch, I think. On days when the number of Brahmins was large, the dal served to the

second batch was swimming in Ganga water—as if a current of the Ganga had flown over it! Vegetables were usually absent in the second batch, but sometimes *pithale* was served.<sup>52</sup> The rice that found no customer in Kashi was happily used in our *anna-chhatra*! But the chapatis were good, and the person who served them did not stint. Only one large spoonful of ghee was served, though. Sometimes there was buttermilk curry. The second batch sat down to eat sometimes at twelve, at other times at four. If the number of Brahmin diners was reasonably small and enough food was left, we would get to eat between twelve and one. But if there were many Brahmins, rice and chapatis had to be freshly made, and we had to practise austerities for three hours. I would carry along *Kaumudi*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, or some other book with me, and continue to read until the rice was actually on the plate.

I had spent barely a couple of months at Kashi when a student named Nilkantha-bhat Gaitonde arrived. He had studied the Vedas under the patronage of the *math* at Kavle [in Goa], but he had an intense desire to study the shastras and had come to Kashi for this purpose. At first he had his meals in Ahilyabai [Holkar's] *anna-chhatra*. But it was too far from Brahma Ghat, so he too started going to Balaji's *chhatra* with me. He used to be furious that the manager of the *chhatra* deliberately insulted us by serving us in the second batch. He would often say that an application should be sent to the Maharaja of Gwalior to teach these Brahmin managers a lesson. He would say to me, 'If only I knew Marathi as well as you do, I would have taught them a lesson long ago; but you don't seem to mind at all! You bear these insults quietly.' I would reply, 'Look, it's all right for you. If Balaji's *chhatra* closes its doors to you, you can go back to Ahilyabai's. But what about me? Suppose I sent a letter of complaint and it came back to these officials for inquiry. They would first throw me out and then send a favourable report. The rich among the Saraswats would call me a fool, instead of helping me because we fought on behalf of the Saraswats. And the end result of all this would be that I'd have to give up my

<sup>52</sup> *Pithale*: a simple semi-liquid preparation of gram flour, along with rice or coarse unleavened bread (*bhakri*), this is poor man's fare in Maharashtra. A drier variation of *pithale* is known as *zunka*.

studies and leave Kashi. So I don't want to get into all this. As long as I wish to stay here, I have to endure some hardships, even insults. But it is good to have this one meal a day. My health depends upon it.

As if to complete our hardships and insults at the *chhatra*, our previous karma had sent Mrityunjay to Kashi. Mrityunjay was a Saraswat Brahmin from Cochin who came to Kashi at a young age. People made an effort to teach him, but he absolutely would not yield. Even before my stay in Kashi began, Mrityunjay had been there more than fifteen years. At the time, he had already enjoyed the delicacies of the *anna-chhatra* for about twelve years, though his verbal valour had resulted in his having to leave it a couple of times. When the great personage faced starvation, he was given food again through the intervention of the widows who cooked there.

Mrityunjay had experience of what would happen if his verbal arrows were aimed at the officials. The second batch did not usually include Brahmins; and Mrityunjay lacked the courage to quarrel with the ones it had because he knew that the *chhatra* would close its doors to him again if they complained to the officials. What wonder then that the current of his speech was directed entirely at harmless people such as us! Even so, he favoured me more than Nilkantha-bhatji. At first he conversed with us, but had nothing to say besides complaining of all and sundry; and we did not care for that. The great personage then turned against us. His strongest accusation against us was that we subsisted on food at the *chhatra* and studied the shastras. Sooner or later we would utilize this learning towards earning a living, that is, we would sell the shastras and thereby go to eternal hell! He would turn to some Brahmin or the other at the *chhatra* and say, 'I have been in Kashi for fifteen years now, but do you know of my ever having studied the shastras? Look, some wise people here had plotted to teach me the shastras. But I said, "Oh no, I don't want the shastras. Who wants to sell the shastras and go to hell?" And these *anna-chhatras* are not meant for those who study the shastras. They have been established to help people to bathe in the Ganga, eat, and spend their time in Kashi.'

I also recall another Brahmin who usually ate in the second batch. He could not make it in time for the first, because he had to beg for food on behalf of his mistress. He would beg for food in the morning, hand it over to the kept woman, then come to the *chhatra* to eat.

Naturally, he was compelled to eat in the second batch. He got along well with Mrityunjay; but at times they quarrelled. Mrityunjay would tell this Brahmin—and others—all manner of unfavourable things about us through similes and other figures of speech. We quietly endured all this. Nilkantha-bhatji felt great disdain for him; but even he never argued with him.

These numerous hardships at the *anna-chhatra* were compensated for at the *dhyanachhatra* [centre for learning]. I had given Gangadhar-shastri only one rupee and a coconut by way of honouring the guru. He handed me over to Nageshwar-pant Dharmadhikari, one of his foremost disciples, to take proper care of my education. I visited Nageshwar-pant's house at seven in the morning, and he taught me for an hour. But I stayed on until ten, listening to the lessons of other students. In the evening, Lakshman-shastri, Gangadhar-shastri's step-brother, taught me and a couple of other students literature. Both my gurus were well pleased with me. They gave me their own books and took great pains over my education.

After Govindrao Palekar's death I had, as I said, an argument with Chidambar Godbole. He could not tolerate my staying in the *math* at Durga Ghat and began a quarrel with me over a trifling complaint. One day he said, 'Stay here if you can pay the rent; otherwise get out. I will throw your belongings out in the street.' I knew it was no use arguing with this *bhat*. But where was I to go? At Brahma Ghat there is another and very large *math* of a swami of Cochin. The manager there, Madhavacharya, refused me shelter. Now I had no option but to stay on the bank of the Ganga. I knew Shri Krishnaji Sathe (now renowned in Mumbai as Appasaheb Sathe, Vaidya) quite well; in fact it was through me that he came to the house of Gangadhar-shastri and Nageshwar-pant. At this time he used to stay at Sanglikar [Patwardhan's] *wada* at Brahma Ghat.<sup>53</sup> When he heard of my problem, he told me to move into his room at once. I was afraid that if Sanglikar's administrative officer heard of him sheltering a Shenvi, Sathe too would be expelled. Sathe spoke to the administrative officer and with great difficulty got permission to let me stay in his room for a few days. After

<sup>53</sup> Patwardhan was chief of the princely state of Sangli in south Maharashtra.

staying more than a month in Sathe's room, I happened one day, when going to the Ganga for my bath, to meet Madhavacharya. He said, 'Why do you stay in Sanglikar's *wada*? We have so much room available in our *math*.' I was astonished by his words. A month and a half earlier he had no time for me; how had he found the time now? I said I was all right where I was. He insisted again once or twice, so I went to stay in his *math*. It is still a mystery to me how Madhavacharya suddenly changed his opinion of me. Either Nilkantha-bhatji told him something favourable about me, or my studious attitude inspired respect in him. Whatever the case, his granting me shelter in his *math* solved my problem of accommodation. Nilkantha-bhatji stayed at the Shenvi *math* at Durga Ghat; now he also moved into the *math* at Brahma Ghat. Madhavacharya had a room repaired for our use, at his own expense.

At the end of March 1901, a plague epidemic struck Kashi. There were a few cases near our *math*. A neighbourhood milkman of our acquaintance died of the plague. We were terrified. But what could we do? If we fled, we would starve to death. Nageshwar-pant Dharmadhikari gave us moral support, saying, 'Look, it is better to die here than elsewhere. If we die here, people will at least kick us into the Ganga. And if our bodies fall into the Ganga, what further purification shall we need? People come from afar and stay for years just to die in Kashi. So it is altogether inappropriate for us to run for fear of the plague.' We of course were sceptical of being purified if our dead bodies fell into the Ganga; had it been possible to make food and other arrangements elsewhere, we would not have spent another moment in Kashi.

One day I ran up a high fever and had a strong suspicion it was the plague. I told Nilkantha-bhatji to leave my room at once. He was very timid, but on this occasion he displayed great courage and said, 'No matter how much you insist, I shall not leave you. If we are to die, let's die together right here.' He did not even move his bedding, which lay beside mine. He went off to a *vaidya* and brought me medicine which cured me in a week. But for the next fortnight or more I lacked all strength. At this time, Madhavacharya's wife took great care of me. This saintly lady would get up early in the morning and cook a special meal to suit my dietary requirements. It would be no exaggeration to



say that she took as much care of me as she would of her son or younger brother. In two weeks I recovered completely and started going again to Balaji's *chhatra* for my meals.

The plague had now accelerated. Dead bodies had to be brought in carts because no men were available to carry them—or so I heard. In summer it was difficult to sleep indoors, so I slept on the roof terrace. From there one had a clear view of the funeral pyres on Manikarnika Ghat. On many a night, when one had just dropped off, a dead body would be brought to the steps below our *math*, and the loud shouting and wailing would begin. In time we grew accustomed to this and it no longer disturbed our sleep. Gangadhar-shastri had gone away with his family. But Dharmadhikari stayed on, so our studies were not seriously disrupted.

The plague stopped completely before the rains began. We were doing well in every way. But my *dhotars* were quite torn, and it would have been impossible to pull on for another month with them. But how was I to buy new *dhotars*? I wrote to Dr Wagle, requesting him to send at least 5 rupees for new *dhotars*. But true to his habit he did not reply. I also conveyed my pitiable state to Shri Vishnu Naik and requested him to send at least 5 rupees, but in vain! He was not usually tardy replying to letters, but on this occasion he did not reply at all. I can't remember if I wrote to Shri Bhiku Naik; I must have. There seemed no hope of help from anyone. I made a resolve that I would not in future depend on old friends for anything; I would not inform my friends of difficulties or beg them for aid, no matter what calamities or misfortune befell me. I would overcome adversity wherever I was on the strength of good sense, wisdom, and honesty. But in a holy place like Kashi, one could not earn even a rupee by manual labour. Even so, I did not despair but tried to find a solution.

There lived in Kashi a young guru of the Gujaratis named Goswami. He was very rich and studied with Gangadhar-shastri. He wanted a copy of *Amarakosha* that had the [Sanskrit] verses printed in the centre and the Marathi meaning on one side. I had just such a copy published by Nirnayasagar [Press]. I gave it to him to read, but he wanted to buy it. Its original price was a rupee and a quarter. I told him that I would have given it to him free of charge, but he should pay me a rupee because I was in dire need just then. Goswami paid me a rupee and a quarter even though I protested. I bought a pair of *panchaas* for one

rupee and two annas. They were not very sturdy, and I could have managed only for a couple of months with them. So I resolved to save the paisa given at the *chhatra* every day, instead of spending it on oil [for the lamp], and collect a rupee in a couple of months for new *panchaas*. We received a paisa every day as *dakshina* at the *chhatra*, but it had to be spent on oil for the night. Besides, the *chhatra* was closed on Ekadashi, when we needed to buy rice, etc.<sup>54</sup> Sometimes we could eat at Madhavacharya's house on Ekadashi. Dharmadhikari gave a note to Nilkantha-bhatji once a week for free groceries from a moneylender. We would give these to Madhavacharya and arrange for our meals on Ekadashi. But how were we to light the lamp? So we decided not to light it, but recite what we knew by heart. The usual routine was that Nilkantha-bhatji would recite *Ashtaadhyayi*, and I would repeat it after him.<sup>55</sup> Thus we sat in the dark and collected four annas each by accumulating our daily paisas at the *chhatra*.

I have not introduced Pandharinath Hajam [i.e. barber] to my readers. He is known in Madgaon not as Pandharinath, but as Guno Hajam. Guno was born near the Mhalsa temple of Mhadadol, and is about my age. Although born in a place like Mhadadol, he has not picked up any of the vices associated with the place. What is more, he is not even addicted to tobacco—which everyone in Goa, young and old, is. He has acquired through his own efforts a knowledge of many crafts—he can draw pictures, make clay figurines, and bind books. He used to do all this in his spare time. At present this man makes biscuits in Madgaon. He saw a biscuit-making machine in Mumbai; upon returning home he collected scrap, worked occasionally as a blacksmith, and constructed a similar machine. He now uses this machine. This is not the place to describe his many virtues and talents; that would require a separate article.

Pandharinath first came to our house in 1892. For a while he would travel from Mhadadol, shave people, and return. Later, he came with his family to stay nextdoor to us. Sonba Mulgaonkar and I were greatly attached to him because of his virtues, such as honesty, pure conduct, industriousness, freedom from addictions, and interest in education. Our respect for the industrious Guno Hajam—born near a temple

<sup>54</sup> Ekadashi, the eleventh day of both fortnights, is regarded as holy.

<sup>55</sup> *Ashtaadhyayi* is Panini's exhaustive work on Sanskrit grammar.

(and in Mhadadol at that)—equalled our disdain for the typical Goan who whiled away his time gambling in the prostitutes' houses near a temple. There are many so-called rich people in Goa who live off their fathers and spend their time in gambling and vice. Perhaps there are still some middle-class people in Goa who consider it creditable to be associated with such folk. But I never made the attempt to be even barely acquainted with such rich people. If I ever had occasion to mix with them, I never derived from them the pleasure that I did in Guno Hajam's company; on the contrary, it saddened me to see these idiots enjoying their ancestral wealth to the fullest. If only our country is blessed with industrious people like Guno, and their education provided for from childhood, it would take no time for our country's misfortunes to end. Be that as it may. The reason for my remembering him at this juncture is that after I was tired of writing to my well-to-do friends, asking for five rupees, I also wrote to Guno. I had no hope of getting any help from him, because if he earned a few annas shaving people the whole day, what would he have left beyond ensuring his family's subsistence? Even so, I was sure he would borrow a rupee or two from someone and send it to me; and perhaps I had even asked him to do so. Of the rupee and a quarter given by Goswami, I had spent a rupee and two annas on two *panchaas*. After I had committed *Ashtaadhyaayi* to memory in the dark to save money towards covering eventual future nakedness, a registered letter came from Guno. It contained a British ten-rupee note. Guno claimed that this money was not his own, but given by my sister. Whatever the case, he did not forget me as my other friends had done. He conveyed the news of my poverty to my sister—although I did not like this—and exerted himself sending me those ten rupees. In the winter of 1901, this money came in very useful.

Shri Moreshwar Palekar had offered me a good quilt of his grandfather's, but I refused it, not having an adequate idea of the North Indian winter. Later, when the winter (of 1900) arrived, Kashibai gave me an ancient quilt. I somehow managed the winter with the help of this quilt and returned it to Kashibai in the summer. A pillow I did not possess at all. After I came to stay in the Shenvi *math* at Brahma Ghat, I found there, lying in a corner, some tattered pieces of an old cloth carpet belonging to Madhavacharya, and some strips of cloth. I washed them, stuffed them in bags made of pieces of the cloth carpet, and

made two pillows—one for my own use and the other for Nilkantha-bhatji. These pillows were softer than stone, and the food in the *anna-chhatra* was tastier than husk; even so, in Kashi we experienced to the fullest the [Marathi] saying, 'Husk for one's hunger and a stone for one's sleep.'

Any sort of a pillow would do, but how to get hold of a quilt? It was no longer possible to get Kashibai's quilt, and besides, it was not possible to ward off the cold with it—because its condition was as bad as that of an old fort blown up by cannon fire. It had large holes in a number of places and the cotton wool inside seemed to be struggling to liberate itself from the covering outside. In some places it had already pushed aside the covering and become wanton; it was obviously futile to request this quilt of Kashibai. Pandharinath Hajam's letter came in time, so I no longer needed to worry about winter. I spent almost two rupees on a coarse white blanket. I had with me another coarse blanket that I had brought from Pune. With the help of these two blankets and the coat given by Dr Wagle, I withstood the winter of 1901. Upon getting Guno's letter, we stopped sitting in the dark and started spending the paisa received at the *anna-chhatra* on oil once again.

There was a Nepali youth named Durganath in our *math*; he also studied with our guru, Nageshwar-pant Dharmadhikari. I had not forgotten Dr Bhandarkar's words—that it was necessary to get to Nepal to acquire knowledge of Buddhism. Durganath was likely to be helpful in this enterprise, so I formed a friendship with him. In January 1902 Durganath decided to go home to Nepal. When he told me of his plan, I insisted that he take me along. But getting to Nepal was far from easy. First, no one is allowed to step into Nepal across the border without a pass from the Nepali government. Second, the route is difficult, and one cannot even catch a glimpse of Kathmandu (Nepal's capital) without climbing high mountains. Third, I had only about four rupees left; how to manage such a long journey with such little money was a problem. However, I resolved to go with Durganath if I could get a pass from the Nepali government, regardless of the other problems. His grandfather was a high official in the office of Nepal's prime minister. At my insistence, Durganath obtained a pass for me through his grandfather, and we finalized our plan to leave Kashi on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

Veda-shastra-sampanna Kalyan-shastri was a resident of Kolhapur. A few days after my arrival at Kashi, he arrived there on a pilgrimage. I met him at the *math* of the Shaivite swami. He was elderly and had a bad leg, so I was of great help to him. He bought me a copy of *Siddhanta-Kaumudi* when he left. The book was very useful to me, needless to say, because this was the text I studied most. Before I left for Nepal, Kalyan-shastri again came to Kashi. This time he stayed with Madhavacharya. He found out how far my studies had progressed and asked me certain questions; he was very happy to receive satisfactory answers. He appreciated my having progressed thus far over about a year. He said, 'Study the shastras for another year or two, and come to Kolhapur. I will try to get you a job worth 50 to 60 rupees.' I replied, 'For the time being I have planned to go to Nepal. If I survive the journey, I will work out what to do later.' Without demurring, he gave me four rupees towards my travel expenses.

My gurus felt a little sad to learn of my plan to go to Nepal. But Dharmadrikari and Lakshman-shastri Telang probably believed that I would return; they did not try to prevent me. Gangadhar-shastri, however, was opposed to my departure. He knew a little astrology, on the strength of which he predicted that some terrible calamities would befall me within a month or two. So he insisted that I not leave Kashi until the foretold period of ill fortune had passed. I found it hard to convince him. I said, 'If the rules of astrology foretell that I shall be visited by dreadful calamities over this period, how will they be averted by my staying on in Kashi? And if I am destined to die on the way to Nepal, how can that be averted?' After much argument, he finally gave me his permission—with great reluctance.

### 10. Journey to Nepal

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1902, Durganath, a friend of his, and I left Kashi. The next day we reached Raxaul station which is quite close to the Nepal border. The Nepali security post of Birganj is just two miles away. We spent the night at a place near the station. I managed those two days on uncooked snacks.<sup>56</sup> At dawn the next day, we crossed the border

<sup>56</sup> Rules regarding Brahminical ritual purity apply only to cooked food, but not to certain types of uncooked food, such as parched rice, sweetmeats, and fruit.

into Nepal. I was wearing old southern-style shoes, given by Madhavacharya. They were quite torn, and I removed them on the way with the intention of throwing them away—and found my right foot completely covered in blood! The shoe had bitten it badly, the foot had bled, and the blood had immediately frozen because of the extreme cold—but it was so dark I had not realized this. We reached Birganj before people had begun to stir.

The notebook in which I wrote a detailed account of my journey after this point is lost, as I said. So now I have to rely on memory. I do not remember the names of all our halting points. We left Birganj after lunch. I had brought along my dumbbells, which I left with a shopkeeper there. Now my luggage contained an old coarse blanket given by Madhavacharya, my own two coarse blankets, and some books. No porter was available, so I had to carry all this myself. After walking about three miles I was utterly exhausted. I had not eaten enough the past three days; walking three miles with that load was impossible in my weakened state. Many were the times I thought of going back from that point. But the thought that not going to Nepal meant no knowledge of Buddhism triumphed over the thought of a retreat. Finally, we came across a Muslim porter on the road. He agreed to accompany us to Bhimphedi for a rupee and a half, and he carried my luggage on his head. We made our first halt at a village (whose name I do not remember) five miles from Birganj. I ate only parched rice and jaggery in the evening. The following day, that is, on Wednesday, we walked about ten miles. At this point the Terai was left behind, and the forest at the foot of the Himalayas began.

The two parts of Nepal are the mountainous region and the Terai. Nepal obtained the Terai from the British government. Its inhabitants are Indian, its government officials Nepali. A high official is stationed at Birganj. The Terai probably yields the Nepali government higher revenue than the mountainous region. It grows an ample crop of rice; what is known as Kanpur rice probably comes from this region. It is fertile but prone to malaria, so Nepalis are afraid to live in it. Durganath was eager to cross the Terai and catch a glimpse of the high mountains of Nepal. He would race ahead like an arrow; I would slowly follow. At Birganj he met two servants sent by his grandfather. They laughed aloud at my distress. I was astonished by their cruelty. My Muslim servant, however, pitied me. On Thursday afternoon we

cooked on the bank of a stream. Durganath gave me a small iron pot. There was such a gusty wind that the rice I cooked in it became mushy in one part of the pot and was uncooked in another! From that day Durganath began sharing his meals with me.

As we left behind the Terai and travelled through the great forest at the foot of the Himalayas, my physical distress was aggravated. The extreme cold in the mornings made my bare feet bleed. When the dust on the road settled on them, it would trouble me a great deal. At night we would stop at one of the shopkeepers' huts along the road, and start again at dawn. In the afternoon, the meal would be cooked and eaten when possible. It consisted of nothing other than just rice and water boiled with a kind of *aamsol* available in Nepal.<sup>57</sup> But even this tasted good when I was hungry. At night we managed with parched rice and jaggery available in shops about five or six miles apart. But this Nepali jaggery was so bad and expensive that I stopped eating it and contented myself with the parched rice.

We went along the bank of a river. At times, while I was still in bed, Durganath would proclaim he was bathed. I would wonder when the fellow had arisen, gone to the river, and bathed in that dreadfully cold weather. I would say: 'You Nepalis are really hardy; you don't mind the cold and the wind. I'd find it impossible to bathe in the river so early in the morning.' The third day after leaving Birganj, we stopped for the night at a shopkeeper's hut by the river. The river was visible from our hut, but the way to it was so difficult that it took a long while to reach the water. There was a short cut, but it was very dangerous as it involved descending a cliff. I awoke early, but stayed in bed because of the extreme cold. Just then Durganath got up and began preparing for his bath. He took water in a small bowl and put a few drops on the tip of his tiny tuft of hair, then on both earlobes, both eyes, and forehead; and thus completed his bath. Then he said, 'What, are you still in bed! I have already finished my bath!' I said, 'I'm in bed because of the cold. But I was awake before you got up, and I didn't see you going to the river. How can you claim to have had your bath?' He replied, 'If you were awake, how is it that you didn't see me bathe with this bowl of water here?' This was when I got a good idea of what a Nepali bath is like. I had heard that in Marwad [in Rajasthan], two or three people

<sup>57</sup> *Aamsol*: dried *kokam* or *mangostana*, sour to the taste.

bathe with a single vessel of water. Following the Nepali style, a hundred Marwadis could have managed with that same vessel! Be that as it may. From that day, during the time I was with Durganath, I began to bathe Nepali-style as soon as I got up.

On Friday evening we reached Bhimphedi. Here starts the final great mountain pass into Nepal. That night we stopped at a shopkeeper's hut. I had some Nepali *mohurs* (about one and a half of them are worth a British rupee). We had exchanged British coins for these *mohurs* at Birganj. I tried my best to persuade my Muslim porter to accompany me to Kathmandu, but he insisted on returning—because he knew the Gurkha temperament well. Our agreement was for him to accompany me up to Bhimphedi, so I had no alternative but to let him go. Durganath found two porters of the Bhotia [or Gurkha] caste to carry my luggage. But they wanted their wages in advance. After paying wages to the Muslim porter, and advance wages to the new porters, I had only one Nepali *mohur* left. I happened to drop it while paying the shopkeeper's wife for parched rice; and it rolled inside the shop. The shopkeeper and his wife made a show of looking for it, but pretended not to find it. In the end I borrowed some money from Durganath and managed.

Early the next morning, we started climbing Nepal's first mountain pass—known there generally as a '*garhi*'. This was probably called 'Khari Garhi'. At its top the Nepal government has tight security arrangements. Everyone is subjected to a body search and no stranger is allowed to go further without a pass. Durganath had a pass only for five, which naturally would not include my two Bhotia porters. So we decided that I should take over my luggage a little distance before the security post and let the Bhotias go ahead. Being locals, they would not need a pass; but if they accompanied a foreigner, they would. I was utterly exhausted climbing the *garhi*. In addition, I had to carry my luggage as we neared the checkpoint. I somehow managed it up to the checkpoint. There our luggage was searched—during which time the guards stole my socks. I walked on, luggage on my back, but could not see the Bhotia porters. They had walked ahead to the spot where we were to halt for the night and were resting. This spot was, however, a mile away, and it was utterly impossible for me to reach it carrying my load. After walking quite a distance from the checkpoint, I was so tired that I threw aside my bundled belongings and lay down motionless

under a tree. Durganath reached the appointed spot with his porter and found the Bhotia porters. He inquired after me but could not ascertain my whereabouts. So he ordered the Bhotias to go right back to the checkpoint and look for me. Finding me they took my luggage. I scolded them for neglecting their duties but do not know what effect it had, because they did not understand my language well. I recovered some of my strength after resting under the tree for more than half an hour, and walked slowly with the Bhotias to our appointed spot.

Durganath had prepared our meal—which was nothing but rice and *aamsol* water. The place where we had halted was on the bank of a stream. It provided an excellent view of the beauty of nature all around. But the Nepalis had dirtied the place by relieving themselves right near the stove. This would have made it difficult for me to swallow a single morsel of rice at any other time. But on that day I sat even in such a place and ate Durganath's sour-water rice with great relish! Durganath was in a tremendous hurry to get home. He made a dash and reached home by midnight that same day. But his porter, my porters, and I remained behind. At night we halted at an open dharma-shala. Here we ate parched rice and went to sleep. But the cold was so severe that I felt my feet were falling off. It was a very difficult night. The following day, that is 9<sup>th</sup> February, we were on our way again at dawn. The path was covered in snow and I had to walk barefoot. What can I say? My torment knew no bounds. I felt as if I was walking on a hot griddle. As though taking pity on me, Lord Sun spread his tender rays all across the horizon and melted the snow in half an hour. This did not altogether end my suffering, but diminished it considerably.

By about eight that morning we climbed the second mountain pass of Nepal—Chandra Garhi. From the top of this pass the snow-covered ranges of the Himalayas were so clearly visible that for a moment I forgot the pain in my feet. Himagiri [or 'mountain of snow'] has been captured by the Great Poet in these lyrical words:

*There is in the north a divine spirit, the King of Mountains, by the name of Himalaya. Sloping down into oceans to the east and west, it stands as a standard of measurement for the whole earth.*<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> This is a Sanskrit quotation from Kalidasa's *Kumara-sambhava*.

This Himagiri is the home of sages, and arouses in observers sublime religious thoughts by its very presence. Is there a son of Bharat Mata who is not delighted by the sight of its brilliant peaks, shining clear and silvery? It is not possible to describe here the thoughts that rippled through my mind on that occasion: 'I was born in a backward region like Goa. If one from our region travels up to Kashi, it is regarded as an act of great courage. How difficult we find it even to cross the Sahyadris! And how far have I reached, starting from such beginnings! Today I am standing atop Chandra Garhi and gazing at the lovely peaks of the Himalayas! And it is not as if I have done all this because I possess great courage or infinite capacity. It would be rare to find a man as afraid of travel as I. And as for capacity—I know what straits I was reduced to even after this short journey. Therefore, I have obtained this darshan of the King of Mountains entirely on account of my love for the Buddha.' Many such streams of thought gladdened me, and my faith in the Buddha was further strengthened. That afternoon we had our meal before climbing Chandra Garhi, and reached Durganath's house by about four in the afternoon.

Durganath's father and grandfather received me most cordially. That day I had my first tasty meal of the entire journey to Nepal. I slept on the ground floor in an open space. It was excessively cold, but Durganath's father gave me a huge Nepali coarse blanket and made a bed of grass for me. I had a small piece of woollen cloth which I wore as a ritually pure garment for meals in the *chhatra*. Now I tore it into two and wrapped the pieces around my feet in lieu of socks. This reduced the severity of the cold. The next day I got up early and had a Nepali bath, and then my meal at about nine. Nepali Brahmins are non-vegetarian. Durganath did not want me to know that he ate meat, so he instructed his mother to serve me separately. After the meal, Durganath took me to see the chief deities in Kathmandu.

Kathmandu has many temples, big and small; but the two principal ones are Pashupati and Guhyeshwari. First we went for a darshan of Guhyeshwari. There is nothing very artistic in this or any other Nepali temple. Guhyeshwari's temple has a gold spire and a roof of silver sheets. Inside is a small courtyard within which is placed an image of the female genitals [*stri-yoni*], about a cubit wide and one and a half cubit tall. It is probably made of stone, but is covered in a mask of gold.

All around it stand figures reminiscent of our [folk] gods Mhasoba and Dagadoba. The whole courtyard and stone images are so drenched in blood that it would not be inappropriate to compare this place to a slaughterhouse. When we entered the temple, a dog was licking blood quite close to the image of Guhyeshwari, the temple priest was conducting his worship ritual and chanting verses, and on one side sat a Brahmin reciting *Shatachandi* [hymn eulogizing Parvati as Kali]. The whole scene gave me gooseflesh. Just then the priest gave me a sort of Nepali toddy as holy water. At first I did not know what it was; but the awful smell made me ask Durganath if it was toddy. When he confirmed it was, I asked him how I was supposed to drink it as holy water. He said, 'If you don't want to drink it, put some on your head and on your eyes; that's enough.' He then performed this ritual himself. But when he closed his eyes to do so, I threw away the toddy in my palm.

After we came out of the Guhyeshwari temple, we saw at a distance a Buddhist stupa in the shape of a vessel. I had never seen a Buddhist temple or stupa before, and asked Durganath whose temple it was. He replied, 'It has something to do with Buddhists. But don't even look at it, because there is a religious injunction that Brahmins must have a [purifying] bath if they look at it.' Durganath's words astounded me! It was all right to drink toddy disguised as holy water in Guhyeshwari's temple, but even a distant glimpse of a Buddhist temple was unholy! Never had I imagined that the Nepalis harboured such disgust for Buddhism. But I could not afford to argue with Durganath over this. If he discovered me to be an adherent of Buddhism, he might be the first to start harassing me. So, without responding, I turned my back upon the Buddhist stupa and started towards the Pashupatinath temple with him.

The Pashupatinath temple stands on a mound. It is very small and contains a large Shivalinga with four faces on its four sides. The priests here are southern Brahmins; naturally, there is no animal sacrifice within the grounds of this temple. But animal sacrifice is performed in the smaller temples around, such as Gorakshanath. The surprising thing is that even the image of a holy man like Gorakshanath is drenched in blood. The priest of Pashupatinath was Krishna-shastri Dravid, who had been a fellow student with my guru

Gangadhar-shastri Telang, they had shared the same teacher; and Nageshwar-pant Dharmadhikari had studied under Krishna-shastri for a while. When I left Kashi, Nageshwar-pant had told me to inquire after Krishna-shastri's well being and convey respects. But when we went to the Pashupati temple, he was busy with a worship ritual which would continue until three in the afternoon. So it was not possible to meet him that day. But when he heard that I had come from Kashi, he sent word requesting me to visit him the following evening. From the Pashupati temple we came straight home.

The next morning, after I had finished my ablutions and Nepali bath, Durganath's father took me to the bungalow of Bhim Shamsher (the then commander-in-chief) around 7 o'clock to see the Nepali system of judicial appeal. The dew in the street gave me some trouble [because of my bare feet]. Commander-saheb's bungalow was an ordinary three-storeyed house, but with a very large compound. When we arrived, about twenty-five soldiers were at their drill. Just then, Commander-saheb gave darshan from a third-floor window to the people gathered below. He was accompanied by an administrative officer. The large dot on his forehead near the hairline clearly indicated that Commander-saheb had had his—perhaps Nepali—bath. Although he called himself a Kshatriya, his physique was of the Mongolian type. The moment the great personage opened the window and showed his face, a commotion began in the crowd below to make salaams. Everybody then started laying his complaint before Commander-saheb. For a few minutes we could not make out what anyone was saying. Finally, a soldier or an official calmed the commotion and ordered the people to appear before the great personage one by one. Even so, every appellant made repeated salaams and shouted out his complaint—so that it was heard on the third floor. One complaint was to the effect that someone had been excommunicated from his caste for no reason. Commander-saheb ordered this complaint to be placed before the royal religious adviser [Rajguru]. There were many others, but instead of settling them the great personage ordered his administrative officer to note them down; and some he settled at once through a negative response. No wonder I found this system of justice very strange, there being no lawyer, judge, or high court. Even so, this direct justice system probably satisfied the Nepalis. I surmised that at least the

Nepali people were not reduced to penury spending their last *pai* on court fees, lawyers' fees, stamp paper, etc.<sup>59</sup> I did not, however, care for the ceremony of making salaams.

I reached Krishna-shastri Dravid's house fifteen minutes before the appointed time. Shastri-buva had finished his worship ritual and was eating at home. He was free by about 3:30. He asked me many questions regarding his fellow student Gangadhar-shastri and his student Nageshwar-pant Dharmadhikari. When I took my leave of him, he gave me a little blessed food [*prasaad*] from Pashupati's temple, and four Nepali *mohurs* for travel expenses. I had exhausted all my savings, so this windfall delighted me. He told me to visit him once more before leaving, and went inside for his afternoon nap. I bought a pair of Nepali shoes for two of the *mohurs* given by shastri-buva and put them on immediately. But they pinched each foot in a couple of places and scraped off the skin, thus adding to the pain already caused by the cold!

I was eager to visit the Buddhist stupa, but as I said it would not have done to let Durganath know this intention. So, one day, I secretly went off to it in the middle of the afternoon. There I had hoped to meet a learned Buddhist sadhu or layman—but in vain. Near the stupa sat some Tibetan sadhus who told people's fortune by throwing dice; on the other side, the whole carcass of a goat was on sale. The entire scene filled me with surprise and sorrow. Alas! Had Buddhism in Nepal reached this state? What dire straits the Buddhist stupa seemed reduced to—even in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal! I consoled myself somehow and inquired if there were any learned sadhus about. But there seemed to be no one more learned than the sadhus who told fortunes by throwing dice.

The sorry state of Buddhism in Nepal disquieted me. Clearly, nothing was to be gained by staying on. But where was I to go? And if I could not find Buddhism, why should I continue to live? For a while I was completely bewildered. The political atmosphere in Nepal was not clean, so Durganath's grandfather seemed to wish for my speedy return home. But he did not think it appropriate to send me back alone. Just then, some vessel carriers arrived in Kathmandu carrying holy water from Badrikedar. Durganath's grandfather knew them well, and all

<sup>59</sup> A *pai* was a coin of the smallest denomination: 192 *pais* made up a rupee.

the arrangements were made through them. Durganath's grandfather had them honoured at the mansion of Diwan-saheb; they probably received about Rs 100. These vessel carriers were planning to go to Raxaul and then on by rail to Haridwar—because the snow made it impossible to travel through Nepal by the mountain route. Durganath's grandfather suggested that I accompany them up to Raxaul, assuring me that they would look after me well. But I could not decide where to go from Raxaul. Just then I had an idea which calmed my unsettled mind.

At Gwalior I had happened to read a book entitled *Kashi-yatra* [Pilgrimage to Kashi] which had mentioned a Buddhist temple, fifteen miles to the south of Gaya, which was then under litigation. I remembered this and resolved to go there, rather than anywhere else, when I left Nepal. I imagined the place was uninhabited and lacking dining arrangements. But I decided to spend the rest of my life there, no matter if it meant death by starvation. Also, I hoped I would meet some Buddhist sadhu or the other pilgrimaging to Buddhagaya, who would tell me how to study Buddhism. And if I met no one and died in that uninhabited place, I would at least die with my mind full of thoughts of renunciation. It would at least calm my mental turmoil, caused by my experience of the downfall of Buddhism in Kathmandu. This resolve calmed my disquietude. I informed Durganath's grandfather that I was prepared to leave Kathmandu with the vessel carriers. There were still a couple of days to go before their departure. So I spent my time calmly collecting information about the Nepali people and, to the extent possible, earning a little money for my travel expenses.

There was a Nepali pandit, Aghorinath-shastri by name, who had studied the shastras under Gangadhar-shastri and who was a teacher of Sanskrit at the *patha-shala* in Kathmandu. Hoping that he too, as a student of Gangadhar-shastri, would help me—as Krishna-shastri Dravid had—I went to see him at the *patha-shala*. This *patha-shala* is managed along the same lines as the one at Kashi, but is smaller. It had about ten teachers, none as renowned as the pandits of Kashi—else why would Nepali students like Durganath have gone to Kashi? Be that as it may. When I went to the *patha-shala*, I met not Aghorinath but another pandit who talked to me most respectfully. But it was easy to surmise from his conversation that these Nepali pandits were poor.

I did not let the old pandit suspect that I was a poor student in need of help. Now there was not much point in meeting Aghorinath, but still, with the intention of visiting him in passing, I went to his house.

Aghorinath's house stood in a lane in the city. It was two-storeyed and had a very large courtyard, as in the *wadas* at Pune. On all four sides were very narrow rooms, occupied by many families. When I entered the courtyard, it was being cleared of rubbish. Some Nepali labourers were carrying away nightsoil in baskets. Nepalis do not throw rubbish outside but in the central courtyard; they relieve themselves there, and, right there, throw the bones of goats and sheep after eating the meat. Once or twice a year all this accumulated waste is carried away in baskets to nearby fields and used as manure. Durganath's house stood outside the city, and all the rubbish, dung, etc., was collected quite near the house. But the fresh air there prevented the dirt from bothering me much.

The 'beauty' of Aghorinath's house, however, disgusted me. A couple of children were relieving themselves in a veranda. Just then someone threw the bones of a goat or sheep down from the upper floor. It was impossible to even step on to the veranda. So I inquired from a distance if Aghorinath was at home. As soon as I heard he was not, I immediately left the filthy courtyard and went off. I did not revisit the house.

Nepalis are generally very suspicious and afraid to offer shelter to strangers. Perhaps they fear a spy of the British government seeking shelter with them to gather information about their country, resulting in them being punished. There had also just been a political revolution in Nepal, so I could not freely mix with the Nepalis. Durganath also avoided discussing political matters. However, from a couple of southern Brahmins who were in Kathmandu at the time, and from Krishna-shastri Dravid, I managed to gather some information. This it would not be out of place to present here, in brief.

There once lived in Nepal a famous man named Jang Bahadur [Rana], who rose from the rank of a soldier to that of chief minister. At the time, power was concentrated in the hands of a royal family known today as Panch Sarkar [Five-Times Illustrious Ruler]. But Jang Bahadur massacred all the high officials at one go and usurped power for himself, reducing the king into becoming a nominal head. The fate

that befell the throne of Satara after Chhatrapati Shahu in Maratha history befell the throne of Nepal during the reign of Jang Bahadur.<sup>60</sup> Political power now devolved upon Jang Bahadur's family. He assumed the title of chief minister (known as Teen Sarkar [Three-Times Illustrious Ruler] in Nepal, while the nominal king is known as Panch Sarkar), and appointed his brother commander of the army. During the revolt of 1857 Jang Bahadur helped the British government and acquired great fame as well as a large region near the Terai. After Jang Bahadur's death his son became chief minister. But he was not very bright, and his paternal cousin Bir Shamsher assassinated him and a couple of his friends, and usurped the throne. Bir Shamsher's younger brother Khadga Shamsher became the army chief; the brother next to him, Dev Shamsher, became governor of Kathmandu; and the one next to him, Chandra Shamsher, was appointed to another position below that.

Bir Shamsher introduced several improvements in the state of Nepal. But his brother Khadga Shamsher conspired to assassinate him and usurp the office of chief minister. This conspiracy was soon exposed, whereupon Bir Shamsher exiled him at once and made Dev Shamsher the army chief. In March 1901 Bir Shamsher died, and, in accordance with the law, Dev Shamsher assumed the office of Teen Sarkar. He was given to a life of luxury, but wanted to disseminate education in his kingdom. He also wanted to abolish slavery in Nepal. He held a great music concert in Kathmandu by inviting renowned male and female singers and musicians from India. Thousands of rupees were spent on the event. His family members did not approve of this, nor of various other acts of his. Bir Shamsher's sons joined hands with their paternal uncle Chandra Shamsher and conspired to oust Dev Shamsher.

Two of Bir Shamsher's daughters were given in marriage to the king of Nepal. Naturally, Bir Shamsher's sons had influence with the king. One day, they told Dev Shamsher that they intended to divide their

<sup>60</sup> Chhatrapati Shahu, grandson of Chhatrapati Shivaji, died in 1749, following which his (now hereditary) prime minister or Peshwa appropriated all political and military power, reducing the later Chhatrapatis to nominal heads of the Maratha state.



father's estate and he should be present on the occasion to counsel a fair division. Dev Shamsher went to his older brother's house with a large retinue, accompanied by Chandra Shamsher, the army commander. Nepal's nominal king, Panch Sarkar, had also come there to resolve the quarrel among his brothers-in-law. On this occasion, Dev Shamsher was accompanied by an army of 500. In addition, Rajasaheb's retinue, Commander-saheb's retinue, etc., were on the grounds outside. Dev Shamsher talked to his nephews for a while and then one of them said, 'We need to discuss some things with you in private, so please come inside.' Dev Shamsher left his bodyguards there and went inside. There his nephews and their accomplices threatened him with pistols and shackled him. His bodyguards protested a little but were easily pacified. Later, Dev Shamsher was forced to resign. Panch Sarkar stood at a window and read out the resignation letter to the troops below, announcing that he had accepted the resignation and appointed Chandra Shamsher to the office of chief minister—who would henceforth manage the administration. The troops accepted the order of Panch Sarkar and gave a gun salute to Chandra Shamsher, their former commander, on his new position as Diwan. Poor Dev Shamsher's reign was over; he was sent to the Terai that same night. All this happened in June 1901.

The present Diwan, Chandra Shamsher, has passed the matriculation examination of Calcutta University. He has translated several books on warfare into Nepali. A remarkable thing about him is that he had only one wife. After her death in 1905, he is said to have married again. But he is an exception to his family's custom of [men] having five or six wives at a time. He could have implemented some of Dev Shamsher's plans for reform. But, being aware of the possible repercussions, he carried on his administration at a slow pace. There was criticism in English newspapers of Calcutta, such as *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, to the effect that Dev Shamsher's sudden eviction was very strange indeed. But it did not have a salutary effect on the court, and these newspapers were banned in Nepal. In sum, there were no reforms in Nepal during Chandra Shamsher's rule, and the status quo was maintained.

I spent only ten days or so in Kathmandu. I do not clearly remember the date on which I left the capital of Nepal, but do not think I spent more than ten days there. A Bengali gentleman named Babu

Sharadaprasad, a headmaster there, gave me one British rupee. A couple of other gentlemen helped a little too. Krishna-shastri Dravid gave me a couple of (Nepali) *mohurs* again. I managed to collect a total of five to six British rupees. With that for travel expenses, I left Kathmandu with the vessel carriers of Durganath's grandfather's acquaintance.

### 11. From Nepal to Ceylon

The vessel carriers were a great help to me [on the journey] from Kathmandu to Raxaul. They did not travel long stages, as Durganath had done. As soon as they noticed I was tired, they halted, gave me food first of all, and sought a sheltered place to protect me from the cold. On the way to Nepal I had left my five-pound dumbbells with a Nepali shopkeeper at Birganj; I collected them now. I was not burdened by my luggage on account of the vessel carriers. When we reached Raxaul, I gave them my two coarse blankets, a small metal water pot, etc. Now my belongings consisted of a coarse blanket, a coat, some books, two *dhotars*, a turban cloth, a water pot of metal, two khadi vests, and a pair of dumbbells.

For about two rupees I bought a ticket from Raxaul to Bankipur and reached there the following evening. I had about eight or twelve annas left, but do not remember whether or not I ate uncooked snacks that evening. I usually fasted in the evenings. At Bankipur I stayed in a *math*. On one veranda were spread the beddings of pilgrims—sanyasis, religious mendicants, Brahmins, etc.—and the chief sanyasi made a little room there for me. A bearded mendicant next to me was probably annoyed by my arrival; he aimed sharp verbal arrows at me. I could not understand why; finally I told him I intended to stay only one night and he should forgive me the inconvenience for that duration. This appeased him. He seemed relieved that the possible inconvenience was limited to a single night.

The train from Bankipur to Gaya left between seven and eight in the morning. The fare was twelve annas, but I did not have that much. Adjacent to the *math* where I stayed lived an educated Kayastha named Mangalprasad. I took my pair of dumbbells to him and requested him to buy them. He did not want them, but at my request he bought them for twelve annas all the same (I had bought the pair at Kashi for a rupee

and two annas.) As soon as I got the twelve annas, I went to the station and caught the morning train to Gaya. In the train I met a pandit with three sectarian lines drawn [with a fragrant paste] on his forehead. When he heard I was bound for Gaya he said, 'Look, Gaya is a mercenary city. It is very difficult for a student like you to manage there—people won't even let you stand at their door. I'll give you the address of a friend of mine. He is a *vaidya*, quite unlike these Gaya priests. If you mention my name, he will let you stay in his house.' I noted down Panditji's name and the address of the Brahmin *vaidya*, but did not think Panditji's criticism of Gaya was justified. How was it possible for a holy place like Gaya to not have provision for simple accommodation for a student such as myself? I did not think I would need to use Panditji's name or his friend's address. I wrote down both as a matter of courtesy and kept them with me. Panditji got off at an earlier station. I reached Gaya at about eleven in the morning.

As soon as I reached the station, the agents of Gaya's priests caught me. Every one of them asked whether I wanted to offer *pinda* [oblation to deceased ancestors]. I would say to them, 'I'm a poor student, I have no money for *pinda*. I wish to stay here only for one night and would be grateful if you could arrange that.' None persisted once they knew I did not want to offer *pinda*. Even one who happened to hear me out said, 'What can I do about you being a poor student? If you wish to offer *pinda*, I can make the arrangements. I can get my master to lend you money to enable you to offer *pinda*. If you don't want to offer *pinda*, you won't get a place to stay.' I wandered the entire city but could not find even a place to keep my luggage. After hearing I was from the South, a shopkeeper said I might find shelter at some houses of southern Brahmins near the Vishnupad temple. Searching there I found the house of a southern Brahmin. He was possibly a Telangana Brahmin, but he was not at home. Some other people were dining at his home. A woman came out and asked what I wanted. I said, 'I would be grateful if you allow me to stay a night. I will pay for my meal.' She asked, 'Do you want to offer *pinda*?' I said to myself, 'Now the time has come for someone to offer *pinda* to me!' I said, 'Give me one meal; I will pay for it. I have only eaten uncooked snacks the last couple of days.' The woman said, 'We do not sell meals. If you want to offer *pinda*, say so; everything will be arranged. Otherwise you'll get nothing here.' Seeing

this southern woman also obsessed with offering *pinda*, I lost all hope of finding food for the noon, or accommodation for the night in the city of Gaya. Perhaps I could have lied about *pinda*, enjoyed the sumptuous hospitality of a Gaya priest, and procured some money for travel expenses. But the thought did not enter my mind. My resolve to never tell a lie, no matter if I died of starvation, remained unshaken.

I left the house of the southern Brahmin and ate some dry snacks at a shop located at the corner of a central lake in Gaya. After resting a little, I suddenly thought of Panditji's *vaidya* friend. I did not have much hope of getting accommodation at his house. Even so, I decided to try and turned towards Vaidyaraj's house, all my luggage on my back. Vaidyaraj lived in a faraway lane. After wandering about I finally reached his house at four in the afternoon, but could not meet him. He was away on some work. His sixteen-year-old son was at home and welcomed me respectfully. But he was not prepared to let me stay in the house without his father's permission. This was like:

*A person abandons his body and goes to heaven, but his karma is there before him!*

I was so tired I could not even think what to do next. I put my luggage on one side of Vaidya-buva's veranda and sat still. After some small talk I asked Vaidya-buva's son about Buddhagaya. He told me it was seven miles away. I asked him, 'Can I reach before nightfall?' He said, 'Easily.' I could not believe Buddhagaya was only seven miles from Gaya. Even so, considering that I could find no accommodation in Gaya city, I thought it better to stay the night somewhere on the way, and said to Vaidya-buva's son, 'I shall go at once to Buddhagaya. But get me a porter; I cannot walk that far with my luggage.' He brought a Muslim porter who, however, asked for eight annas. I had only a quarter-rupee [i.e. four-anna] coin and a paisa left. In the end he agreed to come for four annas.

I found out from experience that the statement in the book *Kashiyatra*, to the effect that 'Buddhagaya is fifteen miles from Gaya', is erroneous. Both the *vaidya*'s son and my Muslim porter maintained that it was only seven miles away. My porter was a good man but knew nothing of the distinction between Hindus, Buddhists, etc. He took

me to the *math* of the Mahant at Buddhagaya. I had thought that Buddhagaya was under the control of Buddhists, but it turned out otherwise. As soon as I entered the *math*, I saw animals—bullocks, camels, and horses—tethered outside. Inside was the image of a goddess being worshipped at the time to the sound of conch-shells. The chief disciple of the Mahant sat on a veranda near the goddess, smoking a hookah. This was the first time I had seen sanyasis smoking hookahs. (More information about this *math* is provided in chapter 14, so only the essential details are given here.) The Mahant's chief disciple ordered that I should be given space in a room shared by two or three students of Sanskrit. He asked me several times to cook and eat my dinner; I replied that I never ate at night. Thereupon he sent someone to the market to buy sweetmeats like *pedhas* and *barfi*, and sent them to my room. The *pedhas* bore that name but contained jaggery instead of sugar, and the *barfi* was practically inedible. I ate very little of the sweetmeats and distributed the rest to the students in the room. During the course of our conversation, the students told me that there was a Buddhist monk [*bhikshu*] of the Maga caste, Dharmapal by name, who had litigated against the Mahant.<sup>61</sup> When asked where he was at present, one student said he was right there [in Buddhagaya].

That night, sleep evaded me completely. I was so eager to meet Dharmapal. The next morning I went off secretly to the Buddhist temple. A guard there took me inside and showed me the image of the Buddha. On the forehead of the image were drawn three big lines denoting a Hindu sectarian affiliation whose purpose I did not understand. (Chapter 14 has more information about Buddhagaya, where this has been explained.) I remained very eager for a darshan of Dharmapal. So, without wasting time observing the objects there and learning their history, I gave the guard one paisa—the only money I had left—and turned towards Dharmapal's dwelling place.

<sup>61</sup> Anagarika Dharmapal (1864–1933) was born Don David Hewavitharana and later changed his name. He was a pioneer of the revival of Buddhism in India and wrote several essays on Buddhism. He was the son of Don Carolis Hewavitharana Wijeyagunaratne (1833–1906), a Sinhala businessman, industrialist, philanthropist, and pioneer of the Buddhist revival movement in Sri Lanka. See the Wikipedia entry on him.

On a mound to the west of the temple, King Mindon Min [Mindon?] of Burma had built three rooms and an adjoining veranda. The Burmese monks living there went back to their country when King Thebaw was arrested and brought to Ratnagiri; and the place came into the British government's possession.<sup>62</sup> Later, the British government gave it to Dharmapal to reside in. On this occasion I saw a monk there, and believing him to be Dharmapal asked in Hindi if he was. He replied in Hindi, 'I am a monk. In this photo here is Dharmapal. Right now he is not here, but in Ceylon.' Then he showed me an image of the Buddha which had been brought from Japan, and also some pictures.

I had been under the impression that the Pali language was old Siamese [now Thai], because I had heard that the king of Siam had published a Pali text known as the *Tripitaka*. Even so, I thought it possible that this monk might know something about Pali, and asked him if he had any knowledge of the language.

He said, 'Our religious books are all in Pali, and we are required to study them by staying in the vihara [residence for Buddhist monks].'

He showed me many Pali books written in the Sinhalese script and read out some sentences. I was delighted to hear them and said, 'Pali is almost like Sanskrit; it will not take me long to learn it!'

The monk asked, 'Do you know Sanskrit?'

'I have read books like [*Siddhanta*] *Kaumudi* and *Tarka-sangraha*, and also a great deal of poetry.'<sup>63</sup>

'In that case you will learn Pali easily.'

Asked whether he would teach me, he said, 'I will not be able to teach you properly. If you go to Ceylon, the great pandits there will teach you the texts and clarify all your doubts.'

'All right. I am prepared to go to Ceylon. But how can I, when I don't have a single paisa left?'

He said, 'If you go to Calcutta, a society known as the Mahabodhi Sabha will help you get to Ceylon. A Sinhalese monk visited this place

<sup>62</sup> King Mindon (1853–78) founded Mandalay as his capital in 1859. His successor King Thebaw (1878–85) was exiled by the British to Ratnagiri. See Wikipedia. Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Glass Palace* (2000) includes a fictionalized account of Thebaw's exile in Ratnagiri.

<sup>63</sup> *Tarka-sangraha* is a basic text of Nyaya Shastra.

recently; he plans to visit the other Buddhist holy places and then leave Calcutta for Ceylon on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March. You will have no problem if you go with him.'

That day was probably the 28<sup>th</sup> of February. I began to feel that if I reached Calcutta within ten days, all my dreams would be fulfilled—in fact, my mind had already raced to Ceylon via Calcutta.

But what of my physical body? The train fare to Calcutta was four rupees and some annas. If I could get that amount, it would not be much of a problem. Therefore I asked the monk to lend me the amount, assuring him I would repay it—even if I did not receive help from the Mahabodhi Sabha to go to Ceylon—by selling my books, etc. He said, 'I have nothing, but you are staying with the Mahant and he will easily give you four or five rupees. He is very rich.'

That day I stayed at Buddhagaya. I had a new, small edition of *Amarakosha* that I had bought in Kashi; one of the three students who shared my room bought it. But none of them wanted *Kaumudi* or the other books. In the afternoon, after lunch, I went to the Mahant. I told him I needed to go to Calcutta and that I would be grateful if he gave me enough money for the train fare. He said, 'The head Mahant is not here; he would have helped you. However, I will help you to the extent possible, I don't want to disappoint you.' He put his hand in his pouch, took out a rupee, and put it in my hands. I accepted it reluctantly. There was no hope of getting anything more from the Mahant. So I went back to the monk, and entreated him in every possible way. But he did not take pity on me. In the end he said, 'You Indians are very deceitful, and Brahmins are the most deceitful of all. A few days ago, two Brahmins came to me and, like you, told me they wanted to go to Calcutta and on to Ceylon. They took eight rupees from me but never went to the Mahabodhi Sabha. I don't know where they are. So I don't trust you at all.' I said to him, 'If you don't trust me, I will hand over my books, a blanket, and a coat to you. Together they will fetch at least ten rupees. Just help me get to Calcutta; and when I return your money from there, send me my books.' But he felt not an iota of pity for me.

The next evening I left Buddhagaya and went to Gaya station. There I met a southern pilgrim. I conveyed my problem to him and said, 'I have a rupee and a half. If you take all my belongings and give me three rupees, I should be very grateful.' But this man too seemed to have

become hard-hearted in the company of Gaya's priests. He said, 'I have spent all my money on this pilgrimage. If you are willing to give me your belongings for two rupees, I will take them.' I said, 'I would have given you everything free of charge. But my situation is so difficult that I cannot. Please give me three rupees—not as the price of my belongings, but as a ritual gift.' But this man felt no pity for me. I did not broach the subject of selling my belongings to other pilgrims, for if the police had arrested me for attempting to sell my belongings at a low price in an unfamiliar region, it would have taken me many days to be free again.

I spent the night at Gaya station. The next morning I decided that it would avail me nothing to appeal further to Gaya's priests and pilgrims who had spent time in their company. If I met a man with a modern education, however, he might well help me. I remembered the professors at Ujjain; but there was no college here. So I decided to meet the headmaster of the high school at Gaya and try my luck. I asked my way, and finally reached his house. The headmaster, Gangoli Babu, was at home. After listening to my tale, he gave me a long lecture on the topic 'One should not beg.' I had often heard that Bengalis are garrulous; that day I had first proof of it. After finishing his lecture, Babu took me inside and showed me a handloom, saying, 'Look, I have brought this handloom especially for the women in the family. In my opinion, they should not remain idle either.' The current of Babu's oratory began to flow again. So I said, 'Babu-saheb, although I have not learnt English, I know everything you have just told me. But this is an emergency. I have to reach Calcutta before the 10<sup>th</sup> of this month for some important work. So I am compelled to beg. If you are unable to help me, I would be grateful if you ask your students or friends to do so.' The headmaster said, 'I cannot get help for you through other people. I will give whatever I can. But my aged mother died recently, so I cannot make [ritual] gifts. In another six days or so, when I am out of mourning, I can grant you suitable honour and gifts. But you would do well to remember that you can expect nothing more than two annas from me; else you'll sit around, depending on me!'

I thanked Gangoli Babu and left his house. I formed the impression that it was not only the priests of Gaya but also others who had grown cunning. Convinced that there was no point in spending even

a moment longer in the city, I went to the station. The dry snacks that day cost four annas. Now a rupee and a quarter was left. I checked the table of fares to see how far I could travel in the direction of Calcutta for a rupee and a quarter, and bought a ticket for Lakhisarai station. I reached it that night. Lakhisarai is a new city. Nothing existed there before the railways, and even at the time of my arrival many shops there were mere huts. I spent the night at the station. The next morning I heard of a dharmashala there and found it with only a little effort. This dharmashala was a shed-like structure. I put down my luggage and sat quietly. Just then a Marwadi servant came in and questioned me about myself. When he found out I was a student bound for Calcutta, he got me some groceries. But as I had no pot in which to cook them he brought me an earthen pot and explained how to make *khichadi*. Accordingly, I put rice, lentils, salt, etc. in the earthen pot and made *khichadi*. I will leave it to my readers to imagine how tasty it was! In any case, having managed the previous day at Gaya only with dry snacks, I did not fail to relish it—to an extent. My meal was over by nine, and I decided to continue onward the same day.

At the suggestion of the Marwadi servant, I went to a few shops and requested help; but gained nothing. One pot-bellied tradesman even threw a paisa at me from the shop and said, 'You can go to Calcutta, or even beyond. I have nothing more for you than this.' This left no room for hope of collecting money by going through the marketplace. So I went to a Kayastha lawyer named Bulakhilal who lived nearby. He seemed a decent man. He gave me a quarter-rupee, in accordance with his capacity, and said, 'I have no influence with these tradesmen. They do not know the value of learning, and do not understand the problems of others.' He counselled me to go to the nearby town of Giddhor and convey my problem to Ravaneshwar Prasad, the chief of the princely state there. In his opinion, Ravaneshwar Prasad was very generous and would certainly help me. So, without further ado, I started by the morning train the following day for Giddhor.

On the way lay another princely state called Khairi. Instead of going straight to Giddhor, I got down at Jamui station and walked about six miles to the maharaja's palace. However, there I discovered that Rajasahab never personally met supplicants, and that he had delegated the task of gifting to a subordinate; but also that even after waiting for a

whole day, no one was given *dakshina* of more than one anna. Dispirited, I left the palace. In the market I bought some parched rice and *pedhas* for a couple of paisas and ate them in the shop. Then I started on foot for Giddhor, five miles away.

At about seven in the evening I reached Giddhor. Maharaja Ravaneshwar Prasad had built a small dharmashala behind his Shiva temple as accommodation for travellers. A man had been appointed to manage things for mendicants and other wayfarers. When I reached, he asked me if I wanted to eat. But I was exhausted and had no energy to cook, so I told the man (known as Jamadar), 'I have no energy to cook. Just get me some dry snacks.' He immediately bought some sweetmeats which were as tasteless as the ones given by the Mahant at Buddhagaya. But being terribly hungry, I ate them somehow and drank some water.

The next morning I went to see a pandit under the patronage of Raja Ravaneshwar Prasad. The sight of panditji's hut-like house led to the surmise that even royal patronage had not helped him propitiate the Goddess of Wealth. Panditji seemed polite in his speech and manners. He listened very respectfully to my account and said, 'You have come to a strange region. You will find it difficult to get help. But Rajasahab will give you something. Even so, you cannot reasonably expect more than eight annas from him. His practice is to feed a person for a couple of days and give two to four annas as travel expenses. But you have come from Kashi, so I expect you will get twelve annas. However, Rajasahab is in mourning, and will not see you for another four days. I shall tell the Jamadar to arrange for your meals until then.' Now it seemed sheer madness to depend on Rajasahab for the fare to Calcutta. I immediately wrote to my friend Nilkantha-bhatji, conveying all my news; and requesting him to send me 3 rupees, borrowing the money if necessary, because I had to go to Calcutta immediately. He sent it by money order which reached me on the third or fourth day after I arrived in Giddhor. I encashed it and kept the money with the postmaster there. This gentleman was a Kayastha by caste and very friendly. I had come to know him well over the previous couple of days.

Now there was absolutely no need to depend on Rajasahab; even so, I thought it proper to see him before leaving. The following day I met him when he visited the Shiva temple, having completed his period of

mourning. Panditji had advised me to write him a letter in Sanskrit, which I had kept in readiness and which I placed in his hand when I met him. In the evening Rajasaheb sent me a rupee as a gift through the Jamadar. So I decided to take the night train to Calcutta, and went to the post office to see the postmaster. The post office was on the way to the station. I sat chatting with the post master for a while. He said, 'What's the hurry? There is plenty of time for the train, and the road is straight. Sit with me for a while and go at leisure.' I said, 'The road may be straight, but it is unfamiliar to me. So it's best to leave before dark.' Even so, the sun had already set while I chatted with the postmaster. I felt rushed. He gave me my three rupees; he also gave me change for a rupee, as I wanted. But he forgot to take a rupee from me, and in my haste I forgot to give it.

The postmaster wanted to come to the station to see me off, but I did not let him. He then wanted to send a peon who, however, could not be located. I too did not feel the need for an escort. It was a big street and I thought I would meet someone going to the station at that time. The postmaster said, 'Just go straight, without turning left or right. That's all.' I took the straight road according to his instruction, but after walking fifteen or twenty minutes came to a fork. Not having understood the postmaster clearly, and not finding anyone around, I took the right fork. Eight o'clock came and went, and so did nine. But I could not find the station. I was astonished that I had not reached the station after walking more than two hours, when it was only a couple of miles away! The road was lined on both sides by tall grass—which, I thought, was likely to conceal wild animals such as tigers. A stronger likelihood in this poverty-ridden area was that robbers might attack me and take away everything. I walked fast in pitch darkness. The road was uneven and I stumbled frequently. But without turning back, I kept on walking rapidly ahead.

At last I saw in the distance a light like that of a railway signal on a tall post, though it was white instead of green. Although there was no station, I was relieved to think that there would be habitation around the light post. Just then a man came by a small path on the side and stood before me. Because of the darkness, I had not seen him until he was quite close. I was convinced that I was caught by a robber. The man asked, 'Sir, where are you going so late at night?' I said, 'Why do you

ask where I am going?' Sensing my implication, he said, 'Sir, I am a poor man, but not a robber. I asked you only because it is unlikely to find anyone here so late at night.' I told him how I came to be there. We reached the light as we talked and he said, 'This is a new station under construction, between Jhajha and Giddhor. But it's not ready yet. Just today the station master and two peons have arrived. They say trains will be stopping here within a week. Tonight you can sleep there. I could take you to the village, but it's far from here; besides, you might hesitate to go with me.' When we reached the station, I offered the man a paisa, but he declined and said, 'Sir, let me have your blessings. I am very poor, but I have no desire to take money from you.' With these words he joined his palms together in a respectful namaskar, jumped over the wire on the side of the tracks, and disappeared into the darkness.

That night the peons at the station gave me a place to sleep. At dawn the next day I started walking towards Jhajha station, keeping to the side of the tracks. I was convinced that I had received a rupee in excess by mistake from the postmaster at Giddhor. But nothing could be done about it. The train from Jhajha to Calcutta started between 8 and 9 a.m. I reached more than an hour early. I washed my face, ate some dry snacks, and caught the train. I reached Howrah station between 7 and 8 p.m. There I crossed the bridge across the Hughli built on ships, and reached Calcutta city at last. But the Mahabodhi Sabha was difficult to find. A man told me to take a certain tram, but I reached the wrong place. Then I caught another tram and came to Dharamtala Street. Upon further inquiry I found the building of the Mahabodhi Sabha.

On that day an American lady named Miss Albers was being given a banquet by the Mahabodhi Sabha. I reached the place just as they finished their meal. At the time a gentleman named Babu Aghori Chandra Chatterjee stayed on the Mahabodhi Sabha premises. He was a clerk at the Calcutta High Court, but knew Dharmapal personally, and the latter had allowed him to stay there. He welcomed me hospitably and let me have a room next to his. Aghoribabu gave me a couple of *rasagollas* that were left over from the banquet, and also some puris. *Rasagollas* are shaped like eggs and also white in colour, which made me suspicious. But Aghoribabu assured me they were made only with

milk. He said, 'You are probably suspicious because we dined together with an American lady. But she is a vegetarian herself. Besides, we ate off banana leaves in keeping with the Hindu custom, as you can see from the leaves here.' At Babu's insistence, I ate the food he had given me. Later he introduced me to Babu Narendra Nath Sen, former editor of the *Indian Mirror*. Narendrababu said, 'If you want to go to Ceylon, you will have to show your certificates. Otherwise we cannot help you.'

The next day, first of all, I bought postage stamps worth a rupee and sent them in an ordinary letter to the postmaster at Giddhor. Then I started thinking about the journey to Ceylon. The plan, according to Aghoribabu, was to take the train up to Tuticorin and then a steamer. But how was I to get the money for the fare? A Bengali gentleman named Charu Chandra Bose was in charge of the administration of the Mahabodhi Sabha at this time. There was another gentleman working under him, named Kishtobabu. (In Goa the name 'Krishna' is corrupted to Kushta, and in Bengal to Kishto.) At my suggestion, Charubabu wrote to the monk at Gaya: 'The man you sent has arrived here. What arrangements should be made to send him to Ceylon?' Pending a reply from the monk, Chandrababu arranged for my meals through the Mahabodhi Sabha. The place had a servant named Paddo (a corruption of Padma). He would cook and do other chores for Dharmapal during the latter's visits to Calcutta. At other times, Paddo had only minor chores to do, like sweeping the place and posting letters. Chandrababu got him to cook for me. That day Aghoribabu took a week off and went home for some work.

After about six days came a reply from the monk at Gaya. He blamed Charubabu quite a lot, saying he did not get money even for his own expenses on time from Dharmapal, so that he was compelled to borrow money. How then could he help send a student to Ceylon? Upon receiving this letter Charubabu said, 'The monk at Gaya does not wish to help you. We too do not have a large fund. We can give you three rupees; manage what you can with that amount.' For 3 rupees I could go to Puri. I planned to continue from there to Madras by subsisting on begged food, then travel to Tuticorin—by train if the Mahabodhi Sabha there helped me or else on foot—and somehow collect the steamer fare to Ceylon. Charubabu approved of this plan and gave me two letters, one addressed to M. Singaravelu, secretary of the Mahabodhi

Sabha at Madras, and the other to Dharmapal. I gave my coat and some other belongings to Paddo, and kept a small metal water pot, two *dhottars*, two cloth vests, a blanket, and a turban cloth. I handed my books over to Charubabu and told him to send them by post if I reached Ceylon safe and sound, otherwise to add them to the Mahabodhi Sabha's library. Charubabu would be at the Sabha from six to eight in the evening and then go home. The train to Puri left between 7 and 8 a.m., so I said farewell the evening before. He instructed Paddo to go with me to Howrah station.

After my plan was finalized and Charubabu had gone home, Aghoribabu returned. When he asked about my going to Ceylon, I narrated to him all that had happened. He said, 'It's sheer madness to go to Madras on foot during these summer days. I am really surprised that someone like Charubabu gave his consent to this. It's a great shame that in a city like Calcutta you should not even get enough money to go to Madras!' At this time, Narendrababu was on the Sabha premises, talking to Miss Albers. Aghoribabu narrated my story to him. When Narendra Nath Babu asked him what the fare to Madras was, he answered, 'About ten rupees. He has already received three rupees from the Mahabodhi Sabha; now he needs only seven.' Narendrababu said, 'If that's all, I will give him seven rupees. But you have to take full responsibility for going to the station, buying the ticket, and getting him into the train.' Aghoribabu said, 'I shall go to the station tomorrow, find out the exact fare to Madras, and let you know.'

The following day Aghoribabu brought all the information when he returned from his office. The fare to Madras was 13 rupees and some annas; the direct fare to Colombo was a few annas less than 22 rupees. So Aghoribabu said to me, 'Even if Narendrababu gives you seven rupees, you will still need three to four rupees more to go to Madras. If you collect twenty-five rupees here instead, you will be able to go straight to Colombo. There are other rich people who are members of the Mahabodhi Sabha, whom we can approach. If they decline, I will take you to some of my acquaintances who will certainly help you. It would be best for you to go Colombo without having to ask for help at Madras.' Then Aghoribabu wrote a letter of request under his own signature, stating that I needed a total of 25 rupees to travel to Colombo. Below he had listed 3 rupees against the Mahabodhi Sabha,

and 7 rupees against the name of Narendra Nath Sen. I took the letter to Dr Amrita Lal Sarkar who wrote an amount of 2 rupees and gave me the money on the spot. Two Ceylonese merchants who stayed at the Sabha gave a rupee. With Paddo I went to the house of Nilkamal Mukherjee, treasurer of the Mahabodhi Sabha. He put down a figure of 12 rupees, but instead of handing me the money, sent it with his clerk to the Mahabodhi Sabha the following evening. This delayed my departure from Calcutta by a day.

After a subscription of 25 rupees was collected, Aghoribabu bought a tin of biscuits for my journey. I made up a bundle by putting together my books, which were kept in the Mahabodhi Sabha's library, and the tin, and took two letters from Charubabu—one addressed to Dharmapal and the other to M. Singaravelu of Madras. I was not sure of getting down at Madras; even so, it was better to have the letter. So I returned Charubabu's earlier letter and got a new one which did not mention money, but only a request for help, if needed, through providing information about possible problems on the way. In addition, Aghoribabu had given another letter addressed to Dharmapal. The following day, that is, on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1902, I went to Howrah station with Aghoribabu. He bought me a direct ticket to Colombo, seated me in the train, and left.

On Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 1902, I reached Madras just before noon. Before arriving, I heard from a gentleman in the train that travellers from Calcutta are kept in quarantine at Tuticorin. I had only a rupee and a half. If I was kept in quarantine for ten days, I would starve to death. So I decided to get down at Madras instead of continuing directly onward, and to see M. Singaravelu to decide how to extricate myself from the quarantine. Accordingly I got down at Madras, and found Singaravelu's house with great difficulty. He read the letter and welcomed me hospitably. I took my bath and had a meal at his house. But our entire interchange was carried on in sign language. I did not know English, and Singaravelu did not know Hindi. Some time after I had finished my meal, his brother—who had gone out for work—returned home. He could speak Hindi and conveyed to Singaravelu my request: I either wanted to reach Ceylon without being quarantined, or to get money for my meals in case I was. At that time, Singaravelu had a friend named Mudaliar who was a health officer at Tuticorin.

Singaravelu gave me a letter addressed to him, to release me quickly from quarantine. Also, he told me through his brother that if by chance I did land in quarantine, I should send him a telegram so that he would send me enough money for my food.

The Tuticorin Mail left between 5 and 6 p.m., but my ticket was for the Passenger. However, Singaravelu's brother knew of a rule that allowed long-distance travel by the Mail. He said, 'The Mail would be very convenient for you. Let's go to the station just now and make inquiries. If you are allowed to travel by the Mail, you can leave today.' We went together to the station in a tonga at about four. There was much time still for the Mail to leave. With a great deal of effort, Singaravelu's brother found out that one could take the train if one had bought a direct ticket from Calcutta to Colombo. Therefore he found a seat for me in the Mail, requested a man of his acquaintance to look after me, and took his leave. I thanked him profusely.

The train had gone about a hundred miles when the ticket collectors started nagging me. One ticket collector would come, check my ticket, tell me to get down, and ask me questions in Tamil or English. Then, upon discovering that I knew these languages as well as I knew Greek and Latin, he would start saying—just as the train was about to leave—'*Po, po, po.*' (This means 'go' in Tamil, which I did not know at the time.) Not knowing what he said, I would stand looking about me in a daze! At one station, the station-master himself, or his assistant, came with me to the compartment, saying, '*Po, po*', opened the door, pushed me in, and closed the door just as the train was about to start. The next morning the ticket was taken away from me, and returned only after we reached Tuticorin. The ticket collector then demanded 2 rupees extra from me. But I could not understand his language, or he mine. Finally I met a Deshastha Brahmin of Tanjore who could speak a little Marathi. I told him the entire story. I asked how it was that the station master at Madras had himself given me permission to travel by this train, yet additional money was now being demanded from me. He showed the ticket collector the railway rules, so that he was satisfied. Then he said, 'These people don't know even the railway rules. You would have had unnecessary trouble, had I not been here.'

At last I was liberated from the station. But as soon as I came out, Dr Mudaliar, the health officer, caught hold of me. He asked where I



intended to stay at Tuticorin. But I did not know that myself. Then I gave him Singaravelu's letter which must have explained everything. He sent me to a public eating-house with his clerk, saying—through the clerk who knew Hindi—that he would send me onward immediately the following day.

Dr Mudaliar had been appointed by the Madras government, but he could not issue passes for Ceylon. The Ceylon government had stationed a Eurasian doctor at Tuticorin who issued passes for Ceylon after examining the travellers allowed in by Dr Mudaliar. The following day I met Dr Mudaliar's clerk and asked about the pass, but he demanded a 'baksheesh' of 8 annas. I was not willing to give him a single anna. Naturally I had to spend the day at Tuticorin. The next day I met Dr Mudaliar again. He was astonished to see me. I did not understand what he said in English. I told him in Hindi that the clerk demanded 8 annas, and would not otherwise let me go. Also, I somehow uttered the words 'eight annas' in English. He understood the gist of my words, and told another clerk to arrange things for me. But it was not possible to get a pass that day. Finally I got a pass on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1902, and started for Colombo that same evening. The steamer was crowded with Tamil coolies. But the sea was calm, and I had eaten nothing in the evening; so I did not suffer. The next morning at about ten, we passengers were put down at Colombo Harbour in a catamaran.

I wandered through many lanes, showing the address written on the letter addressed to Dharmapal, took the tram once or twice, and at long last tracked down his house. At that time Dharmapal lived not in his father's house, but in a room near his father's shop. He was suffering from a migraine. I met him and handed over to him both letters—from Charubabu and Aghoribabu—and also told him briefly in Hindi the reason for my coming to Ceylon. But it was probably the contents of the letters rather than my words that really explained to him why I was there. He told me through signs to have my bath, etc. His interchange with his servant was also carried on through signs.

Dharmapal's servant served me bread and a newly opened, imported tin of butter on the table. It was past two in the afternoon, and I was not likely to get anything else to eat at this time. I was familiar with bread, but had never seen the tin of butter and the yellow-coloured butter inside. I thought it was some kind of European sweetmeat, and

finished about half the tin. Dharmapal's servant must have marvelled at my ignorance, but showed no disrespect at all. However, while serving bread again in the evening, he placed before me a little butter in a beautiful glass dish. That is when I became aware of my ignorance. I surmised that it was not a sweetmeat, but was used like ghee, and asked the servant through signs how it was to be eaten with bread. He demonstrated by spreading two teaspoonfuls of butter on all the slices with a knife. That is when I understood what the proportion of butter to bread should be.

## 12. Vidyodaya Vidyalaya<sup>64</sup>

In 1505 the Portuguese nobleman Francisco de Almeda reached the coast of Sinhala-dvipa. At the time, political power was divided among seven separate kingdoms on the island. In 1517 the governor general of Goa built a fort at Colombo with permission from the ruler of Kotta. After that the Portuguese advanced step by step, and in about thirty years brought the coastal area under their control. It is well known that the Portuguese were religious zealots like the Muslims. Rather than attempting to stabilize their political power, they tried incessantly to propagate the Roman Catholic religion, by persuasion or by force, within the territory under their control. Within their Ceylonese territorial possessions they made a law denying inheritance rights to the progeny of those who did not marry in accordance with Roman Catholicism. Since the Sinhalese Buddhists did not make as much of caste distinctions as Indians, many adherents of Buddhism, because of this law, got Roman Catholic padres to perform their weddings. This gained them entry into the church register, providing them inheritance rights for their offspring. Thus, although Roman Catholicism did not strike deep root in the adjoining areas, in a place like Colombo, which had a large Portuguese settlement, it became difficult even to glimpse a Buddhist monk.

Father Joseph Vaz, who greatly exerted himself propagating Roman Catholicism in Ceylon during Portuguese rule after St Francisco Xavier, was born in the same village as I. He made a thorough study of Roman Catholicism in Goa and went to Ceylon to proselytize. He

<sup>64</sup> This was a residential college.

could not in his wildest dreams have imagined that at the beginning of the twentieth century a young aspirant from his native village would undergo ordeals to reach Ceylon in order to study the religion which he had taken such pains and endured such adversities to destroy. Strange indeed is the working of Time! In Europe itself are born people who devoutly follow the religion which great men like St Xavier and Father Joseph Vaz were engaged in uprooting; and the religion which these holy men so exerted themselves to propagate is on the decline even in its mother country, Italy. The importance Roman Catholicism enjoys in France and Portugal today needs no mention!

In 1658 all the Portuguese territories in Sinhala-dvipa came into Dutch possession. The Dutch were not religious zealots like the Portuguese. They engaged themselves in expanding their trade by entering into treaties with the king and the nobility of Candy. They did not grant patronage to any specific Christian denomination. Even so, Roman Catholicism retained its dominance in places like Colombo. In 1795 the Dutch and the English declared hostilities in Europe. As a result the English attacked the Dutch territories in Ceylon, and conquered them all in 1796. Later, King Vikramarajasingh of Candy fell out with the English. In 1803 the English attacked Candy; but their armies suffered terribly because of having to march through mountainous terrain, and lost. In 1815 a dispute arose between Vikramarajasingh and one of his ministers. The king sent him away on the pretext of some work, and killed his wife and children. Vikramarajasingh was foolish and cruel like our last [Peshwa] Bajirao.<sup>65</sup> But people tolerated many of his wicked deeds because he was the crowned king. However, this last act of his outraged his nobles, who made a secret pact with the English through that minister. In 1815 they invited the English to Candy and handed over to them their heartless king. The English kept Vikramarajasingh somewhere in the Madras Presidency and annexed his dominions.

Thus the British acquired power over the whole of Sinhala-dvipa; and the two-thousand-year-old Sinhala kingdom came to an end! The

<sup>65</sup> Bajirao II was the last of the peshwas and regarded as given to a life of pleasure. He is held responsible for losing the Maratha kingdom to the English in 1818, following which his dominions formed the bulk of the English East India Company's Bombay Presidency.

only consolation was that the pact made by the British government with the nobles of Vikramarajasingh on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1815 contained an article stipulating that British officials should not interfere with Buddhism. And the British were able to adhere to this because of their mercantile mentality. They perpetuated the grants given to Buddhist viharas by earlier kings, and did not allow religious festivals to be disrupted. But British officials believed that Buddhism was a form of atheism and quite useless, so that no one felt the desire to acquire knowledge of Buddhism.

Researchers like the British scholar George Turner did not allow his compatriots' ignorance of Buddhism to last long. Within fifty years of the British government acquiring political power over all of Sinhala-dvipa, many Pali books were translated into English; this began to dispel the belief that Buddhism was inconsequential. Many liberal British officials came to see that Gautama Buddha's teachings were meaningful, and encouraged the study of Buddhism as much as possible. Sir Muthukumara Swami, James da Alves, the Rev. Gogerlay [Gogerle?], and others published a great deal of information about Buddhism in the latter half of the nineteenth century through English translations; and this must be regarded as the result of the liberal policies of British statesmen in Ceylon.

All this had a very beneficial effect on the Buddhists themselves. In a place like Colombo—where no one had dared to admit being a Buddhist—Buddhist viharas were now established. Although Portuguese names like Fernad and Silva were still prevalent, many educated and influential people did not hesitate to openly admit that they were Buddhists. The best among the new viharas is the one established by Acharya Shri Sumangala at Maligakand. It is known today as Vidyodaya Vidyalaya. The objective in establishing it was not merely to worship the image of the Buddha and the peepul tree which was sprouted from the seed of the one under which he had sat [in meditation], nor only to give blessings to people, as in other viharas. Here, monks and householders are taught the Pali and Sanskrit languages, and as a result knowledge of Buddhism has spread within a short time within the community of monks in Sinhala-dvipa, a community which had earlier grown lazy.

Acharya Shri Sumangala, the founder of Vidyodaya Vidyalaya, was born in the village of Hikkaduwa near the city of Galle. Being

the weakest among his siblings, he was regarded by his parents as ill equipped for domestic life. They took him to a Buddhist vihara in childhood and gave him the oath of a *shraamaner*.<sup>66</sup> In those days, parents often handed over to a monk in a vihara any son for whom they entertained no hope. The custom was that he would spend his life there as a monk and subsist comfortably on the revenues of the vihara. Shri Sumangala was an exception to this rule. Despite his delicate constitution and the absence of any learned monk in his vihara, he studied Pali and Sanskrit on his own. He followed the practice of seeking out any learned Brahmin who was visiting from India, and entreating him to impart knowledge. He studied Pali texts like *Vinaya* on his own. He knew them so well that he could answer any questions about them. While I was with him, one day, one of his chief disciples—and a teacher in Vidyodaya College—asked him a difficult question about *Vinaya*. He answered at once, and pointing to a large palm-leaf manuscript lying on a nearby table, he said, 'Go through these pages up to such-and-such letter.' (Palm-leaf manuscripts are given not page numbers but letters of the alphabet.) When his disciple had done so, he said, 'Approximately such-and-such line explains the matter I referred to.' I was astounded at the degree of his familiarity with *Vinaya*.

Only a few years after the establishment of Vidyodaya College, Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky came to Ceylon to propagate Theosophy. Colonel Olcott was publicly initiated into Buddhism by Shri Sumangalacharya, and started to make increasing efforts for the advancement of Sinhalese Buddhism. The hundreds of elementary schools run by Buddhists today are a result of Colonel Olcott's labours. He went from Ceylon to Madras and made it his headquarters. In 1891, Shri Dharmapal, son of the renowned Sinhalese merchant Don Carolis, came to India at Colonel Olcott's suggestion and founded a society for the renovation of the Buddhist temple at Buddhagaya, which was in a pitiable state. This was the same Mahabodhi Sabha which gave me shelter in Calcutta. Its president was Shri Sumangalacharya, and general secretary Shri Dharmapal. This is not the place to get into a discussion of the Mahabodhi Sabha's achievements and their

<sup>66</sup> A *shraamaner* was a novice who was initiated into the Sangha, before he was ordained as a monk.

effect on Indians. For the time being, the information given above about the college and its founder should suffice. Let me turn now to the main subject.

Dharmapal was suffering from a migraine, as mentioned in the last chapter. So it was not possible for him to accompany me to Vidyodaya College. That evening, he sent me to meet Acharya Shri Sumangala, along with a young man named Anavaratna. Anavaratna read out to Acharya two letters of recommendation regarding me that had come to Dharmapal from Calcutta. Acharya asked me some questions in Sanskrit. My answers seemed to satisfy him. He promised to make food arrangements if I came to stay at Vidyodaya College. I was given a room behind the Buddhist temple there, which was repaired for me.

That day I was served food in a porcelain plate on the veranda behind Acharya's dwelling cell. This was the first time I was required to eat off a porcelain plate, and I shuddered at the sight of it. Then I remembered the Buddha reasoning with himself when he was about to eat, for the very first time, the assorted food he had received by begging at Rajagriha. I said to myself, 'The royal-born Siddhartha Kumar was able to conquer his mind while eating food given by ['untouchables' like] Mahars and Chambhars. It is not seemly that I should be disgusted by the food given by my patrons, when I have come here to study his [i.e. the Buddha's] religion.' I exercised great self-control and ate the food. Day by day I became accustomed to eating such food; besides, special provisions came gradually to be made for me.

The Sinhalese people eat rice gruel in the morning, just like our Goan brothers, and make liberal use of coconut in their vegetable dishes. But what is distinctive about their cuisine is that they put pieces of dry fish—called '*ambalakaadaa*'—in everything except rice, rice gruel, and sweet dishes. Of the food brought by people as alms for the monks, vegetarian items like dal were put aside for me. But they all contained *ambalakaadaa*, so that I had to subject them to prior scrutiny. Even so, a piece of *ambalakaadaa* would go into my mouth by mistake, and I would have to spit out the morsel, thinking of the verse by the poet Magha:

*In earlier times, Garuda started to devour the Nishadas [i.e. hunters] and happened to put into his mouth a Brahmin; as a result, Garuda had to throw*

out the entire mouthful! Similarly, a camel was eating his favourite neem leaves which happened to contain a tender mango leaf, and so he spat out the whole morsel!<sup>67</sup>

But I gradually got accustomed to spitting out only the *ambalakaadaa*, rather than the whole mouthful.

The following day, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1902, was the *uposatha* [Buddhist holy day] of Falgun Pournima. For Buddhists *uposatha* is holy, just as the Sabbath is for Christians and *ekadashi* for Hindus. There are four such holy days every month: the eighth day of each fortnight, the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight, and the full-moon day [*pournima*]. Of all these, *pournima* is regarded as especially important, probably because it was the day when Lord Buddha became the 'Buddha' [i.e. the Enlightened One], the day when he preached his Dhamma for the first time at Kashi, and also the day when he passed into Mahaparinirvana (or death). Whatever the reason, on *pournima* many Buddhist lay followers gather in the vihara to spend their time in religious activity. I did not know this. On the day mentioned above, I had heard from a student who spoke broken Sanskrit that the brother of the king of Siam, who had become a monk, was then staying in a nearby vihara. When I asked if it was possible to see him, he said it was, and agreed to take me there that evening.

The vihara where the prince of Siam stayed was not far from Vidyodaya College. We reached there in less than five minutes. At first we met the chief *sthavira* of the vihara, the Venerable Waskaduwa Subhuti.<sup>68</sup> He was famous for his mastery over Pali, but could not speak Sanskrit. However, he seemed to understand what I said. At the end he gave me a copy of *Abhidhaana-pradipikaa* that he had critically edited and published, and sent us to the dwelling cell of the prince of Siam. The monk-prince could neither speak nor understand Pali or Sanskrit. He had mastery over English and French, and all his interaction in Ceylon was carried out in English. The student who had accompanied me could speak a little English. He translated and explained in English to the prince whatever I said in Sanskrit. He also conveyed the gist of the

<sup>67</sup> This is a Sanskrit quotation from Magha's epic *Shishupala-vadha*.

<sup>68</sup> A *sthavira* is a monk who has completed ten years as a member of the Sangha, and is addressed as 'Venerable'.

prince's words to me in broken Sanskrit, which was that the prince was very happy to see me, but regretted his lack of Sanskrit. He hoped to be reborn in India at a place like Kashi, gain mastery over Sanskrit, and acquire the capacity to converse with me.

The sun was about to set by the time my conversation with the prince came to a close. Returning to Vidyodaya Vihara, I saw a large crowd. When questioned, my companion said, 'Today is the holy day of *pournima*. I had heard that Shri Dharmapal was to deliver a lecture, but it must be over by now.' No sooner did I enter the assembly hall in Vidyodaya Vihara with the student, than the group happened to notice me. Everybody started whispering about the Hindu pandit, the Brahmin from India. Dharmapal came to me and requested me to say a few words in Sanskrit. I did not understand him properly, but the assistant teacher of Vidyodaya College, the Venerable Shri Devamitra, explained the matter. I told them I was not sufficiently prepared for a lecture. But they insisted and I had to give in. I stood on the stage with the Venerable Devamitra, and made a short speech in Sanskrit. The *sthavira* explained the meaning in Sinhalese.

The gist of my speech was as follows: 'The tree under which Lord Buddha had sat [in meditation] was destroyed by a king who hated Buddhism. But Mahendra—son of King Ashoka—had brought a branch of the tree to this island, and it is growing unhindered today. This same is the condition of the Tree of Buddhism. The original tree grew in India, but was destroyed by kings and statesmen who were bigoted. However, the branch of this Tree of Dhamma brought here by the Venerable Mahendra has lasted for more than two thousand years. I do not have the authority to talk much about Buddhism. At present I am only a seeker. But I have a strong hope that I shall soon gain knowledge of the Buddha's religion as a student of Shri Sumangalacharya,' and so on.

I had no means of knowing what effect my speech had on the audience; I did not understand what they said in Sinhalese. But after I had finished, Shri Dharmapal said something, and Anavaratna came forward with his European hat, and everybody started putting money into the hat! I did not quite understand what was happening. In the end he collected the money, wrapped it in paper, and handed it over to Dharmapal—which he then held out towards me. I was perplexed! Just then the Venerable Devamitra came forward and said, 'This

money has been collected for you. The men and women gathered here have collected a subscription especially for you; and if you don't accept it, they will be hurt!' I took the money and went to Acharya Shri Sumangala. Placing it before him, I said, 'Your people have given me this *dakshina* because I am a Brahmin. But I have never served as a priest, so I do not know if I can accept it.' He said, 'You are a needy student, so there's no reason to hesitate. You can use the money to buy books.' I went to my room and counted all the coins; they amounted to almost 3 rupees.

The day after I began my stay at Vidyodaya College, I started learning the Sinhalese script. Their entire collection of Pali books was written or printed in the Sinhalese script, so I had to know it. Within a week I was able to read the alphabet, and gradually started reading books in Pali. Acharya Shri Sumangala was to go to Galle for some work at the end of March or the beginning of April, and he asked if I wanted to go along. Eager as I was to see the beauty of nature in Sinhala-dvipa, I agreed at once.

The railway runs along the coast from Colombo to Galle. We made this journey during daytime. The journey reminded me of the coast of Salsette in Goa, between Murgaon [also known as Mormugao] and Cape of Rama. We spent about three days at Galle. Here I noticed a strange thing, namely, just as cashew trees grow on the hills of Goa, so do areca-nut trees grow here, without irrigation. Upon further inquiry I learned that this region gets rain round the year, which is why the areca and other such trees need no irrigation. From Galle we went to Hikkaduwa, Acharya's native village; after a day there, we returned to Colombo. I met many learned monks during the journey, and several of them very respectfully gave me Pali books they had edited.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1902 was Vaishakh Pournima, very holy to Buddhists. This was the day when Prince Siddhartha was enlightened about the true religious path and became the Buddha as he sat under a peepul tree on the bank of the Nairanjara near the Ganga. A couple of days before the Pournima, Buddhist lay followers had started making preparations to celebrate the day in Vidyodaya Vihara. The assembly hall, library, etc. were decorated with flags and banners. I composed a Sanskrit poem to be recited on the day, and showed it to Shri Sumangalacharya; he liked it a great deal. The editors of *Sinhala*

*Samaya* [The Ceylon Times] copied it in the Sinhalese script and published it in their paper. Many people came to know of me because of this, and the monks and householders who knew some Sanskrit showered praise on me.

This admiration from the Sinhalese people and the general situation did not have a beneficial effect on me. My mind was now strongly drawn towards domestic life. Had I accepted a job of teaching Sanskrit, I could easily have earned Rs 60 to 70, which would have supported my family in some Ceylonese town. But then I would have had to abandon my study of Pali and permanently abandon the idea of returning to my homeland.

I had made two resolutions when I left Pune: first, to strive to gain knowledge of Buddhism as long as I lived; and second, to let my Maharashtrian compatriots benefit from this knowledge if I succeeded. The idea of setting up house in Ceylon suddenly undermined both these resolutions, and a dreadful battle ensued on the battlefield of my mind. News of this battle is not as thrilling as the news of normal warfare, so I do not wish to bore my readers by narrating it in detail. Suffice it to say that the resolve made at Pune emerged victorious and the idea of domestic life was defeated.

A famous story goes that after climbing up Sinhagad, Suryaji cut off the ladders and left no alternative—to those of his followers who wanted to run away—but to fight Aurangzeb's forces.<sup>69</sup> I was compelled to use similar tactics to keep under control my tendency to retreat from the earlier resolve. The solution seemed to be to become a monk; that would cut off all ladders leading towards domesticity. As a monk it would be possible for me to stay freely in the vihara and study texts like *Vinaya*. But the obstacles were many. My mother's permission was required, and was not possible to get. The consent of those who sent me to Ceylon was also required. In the end Acharya Shri Sumangala wrote to Babu Narendra Nath Sen to obtain his consent. Narendrababu

<sup>69</sup> The author presumably means Tanaji—and not Suryaji—who was sent by Shivajiraje to capture the fort of Kondana near Pune. It is believed that Tanaji's forces climbed the fort via a steep cliff with the help of a large iguana to whose tail a ladder had been tied. Tanaji took the fort but died in the fighting, whereupon Shivajiraje is believed to have said, 'The fort [*gad*] has come to us, but the lion [*sinha*] is gone.' This gave the fort its new name, Sinhagad.

praised me highly in his letter and gave his consent. Our Acharya found an alternative scriptural rule regarding mother's permission and initiated me as a *shramaner*.

There is no rule in Buddhism that renunciation must be lifelong. But as long as one lives as a monk, one has to abide by all the rules of the Sangha, without exception. A *shramaner* has to follow only ten rules. Although he has no right to interfere in the working of the Sangha, he gets several concessions in the vihara, and his studies are greatly facilitated. Immediately upon becoming a *shramaner*, I gave up all other distractions and began to spend my entire time reading Pali books. After a few days, several monks began pressing me to teach them Sanskrit. I would teach them *Kaumudi* and *Tarka-sangraha* for an hour or two every evening, and spend the rest of my time studying Pali.

Meals were provided in the ashram; moreover, the books I needed were also provided by householders and monks. But all this came to be somewhat disrupted. What happened was that Shri Singaravelu, secretary of the Mahabodhi Sabha at Madras, had gone to England in connection with his work. He spent a day at Colombo either on his way there or back, and came to Vidyodaya Ashram to meet our Acharya. Shri Sumangalacharya probably did not meet him, but the assistant Acharya, the Venerable Devamitra did. He was possibly accompanied by an English-speaking Sinhalese gentleman; otherwise he could not have conversed with the Venerable Devamitra. After some small talk, Acharya Devamitra mentioned me. He probably spoke of me very highly, whereupon Singaravelu said something to this effect: 'Indian Brahmins are very wily and cannot be trusted. This man may look simple and innocent, but do not trust him. Remember, he is a Brahmin.' That same day the Venerable Devamitra made public this opinion of Singaravelu, Secretary of the Mahabodhi Sabha. Acharya Shri Sumangala was not affected by this view, but some of the householders lost their trust in me.

I felt sad when I heard this—not because I would now be inconvenienced, but because of the self-destructive behaviour of an educated Indian like Singaravelu. The same man who offered me food so respectfully and who helped me out by giving a letter for Dr Mudaliar of Tuticorin was prepared to prejudice the Sinhalese people about me only on the grounds of my being a Brahmin. This pained and surprised

me. I recall another incident of about the same time. The famous Japanese warrior General Pokushima came to Colombo on his way home from Germany. He had heard that some poor Japanese students were studying Pali at our ashram, so he came to meet Shri Sumangalacharya. There was only one Japanese student, named Kaundinya, in Vidyodaya College at the time; the other four lived in different places on the west coast. Pokushima met Acharya and expressed his deep gratitude for helping needy Japanese students, and also told him that he had come to the ashram especially for the purpose. An educated Indian man who had helped me and knew something about me had created an unnecessary misunderstanding about poor Indian students such as me; and [by contrast] a high-ranking military officer from Japan had sought out Shri Sumangalacharya in order to encourage Japanese students upon whom he had never before set his eyes. These two incidents, if compared, clarify how caste distinctions impede the patriotism of our educated people.

A few days after Shri Singaravelu's visit, I stopped depending on meals in the ashram and began to subsist on begged food. This being a duty of monks, Acharya did not try to stop me. Cooked food, usually rice, was given as alms. Vegetables, etc. were supplied by the vihara. In addition, milk, chapatis made of rice (called *appa*, and similar to what is called *pola* in Goa), and a banana or two were provided by the vihara in the morning. But I was not able to digest the staple food of the Sinhalese—rice husked and cleaned after having been scalded, for it greatly aggravated my rheumatism and dyspepsia. I was quite fed up. My only relaxation now was reading. There were no facilities for exercise in the vihara; this too considerably damaged my health.

It was under these circumstances that I began learning English. From Mumbai I ordered a book entitled *Self-Teacher* and committed some words to memory. Later, with the intention of facilitating my studies, I went to stay in Shrivardhanaram of the monk Shri Suryagod Sumangala. This monk, Suryagod, learned Sanskrit from me and taught me English, but the arrangement lasted no more than a week or so: he was too busy to teach me. I continued my studies for a few days with the help of a boy who was learning English; but that too did not last beyond a week. I stayed at Shrivardhanaram for about three months. The sea was very close and I tried sea-bathing. But my

health worsened. A nearby monk who knew Indian [Ayurvedic] medicine prepared me some herbal decoctions—these only aggravated my condition. Ultimately, I decided to leave Ceylon and return to Calcutta.

### 13. Madras and Burma

There was a Kshatriya named Mahavir from Bhojpur in North India at the court of Shrimant Malharrao Gaikwad Maharaj. He was an expert in all manner of masculine sport, such as wrestling, which is why Malharrao was favourably disposed towards him. Later, when Malharrao was exiled to Madras, Mahavir left Baroda and, after travelling about with a companion, came to Ceylon.<sup>70</sup> He stayed in Ceylon almost eight years, befriending some monks, and becoming a monk himself before returning to his homeland. He had a hut in Calcutta. A Sinhalese gentleman who lived in Calcutta had stipulated in his will that Rs 20 per month be paid to the monk in that hut. For a few years this amount remained in the state treasury and then suddenly came into the monk Mahavir's possession once the will was probated. Believing that a monk has no need of money, Mahavir decided to use the funds to help Buddhists. He had planned to build a dharmashala for Buddhist pilgrims at Buddhagaya or Kashi, but had not been able to get land in the vicinity of the Buddhist sacred sites there. Finally, he bought a farm at a place [called Kushinara] where the Buddha had entered Parinirvana. (This place is in Gorakhpur district, near the taluka headquarters of Kasaya.) There he began building a dharmashala. The money Mahavir had received would not have sufficed for the purpose, but a Burmese merchant named Khejari who lived in Calcutta contributed about Rs 12,000 towards its completion. Then on, this is where Mahavir lived.

I had read *Yogasutras* at Kashi and was keen to discover if a similar book existed within Buddhist literature. A monk named Priyaratna at

<sup>70</sup> Malharrao Gaikwad (or H.H. the Maharaja Gaekwar), the ruler of Baroda State, was dethroned by the British government in 1875 on charges of having poisoned the British Resident stationed at his court. He was exiled to Madras, where he later died. The case made quite a stir in Maharashtra at the time.

Vidyodaya College had given me a copy of *Vishuddhi-marga*, saying it contained a good discussion of Yoga Shastra. But I did not know much Pali at the time and did not understand it at all. About four months later I happened to get a copy of the book, printed in the Brahmi script. I read it only with the intention of learning the script but found it so gripping that I read some of the early portions twice over and felt a strong desire to try some of the exercises for myself, such as meditation. But in Ceylon it was difficult to find a suitable residence required for the purpose. Sinhala-dvipa has many scenic viharas. If one wishes to see the incomparable beauty of nature, one will find it in Lanka alone. But if I had gone to stay in one of these beautiful viharas, I would not have obtained food suitable for Indians and would have found it difficult to talk to anyone because of the dearth of monks who spoke Pali.

The above-mentioned monk, Mahavir, had a Punjabi disciple named Dharmadas who had come to Ceylon to study Buddhism. He was fed up with Sinhalese food on his very first day, and was the person who gave me information about Mahavir and the dharmashala at Kushinara. If I went there, he said, everything would be arranged for me and I would get ample time for meditation, which is why I planned to go there after visiting Calcutta. But my misfortune had not ended yet, so I was compelled to go to an unthought of place, as is described in the present chapter.

When I informed Acharya Shri Sumangala of my plan, he felt very sad and gave me permission much against his will. I had resolved not to carry any money with me. Accordingly, I took three robes [*chivaras*] worn by monks and a begging bowl, and left on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1903.<sup>71</sup> Dharmapal's father bought me a Second Class ticket to Madras. Other friends gave me biscuits and suitable snacks for the way. In Madras I walked from Egmore station to Shri Singaravelu's house. As I knew a little English by then, I did not have much trouble understanding what he said. He gave me food but absolutely refused to buy my ticket

<sup>71</sup> A Buddhist monk was allowed to wear only three ochre-coloured robes (*chivaras*): one to be draped around the waist and secured with a girdle, one to be draped over the shoulders, and a third to be used like a shawl in cold weather. See D. Kosambi, *Bauddha Sanghacha Parichaya*, p. 8n.

to Calcutta. He said, 'Our Sabha is poor, it will not be able to help you.' He agreed to let me stay until money came from Ceylon; but in a day or two this plan also changed. He had hit upon the novel idea of establishing a new society at Madras and keeping me there.

I wrote to many friends in Ceylon asking for money to get to Calcutta; but sadly, no reply came, or if it did, no monetary help was offered. Naturally, I had no alternative but to agree to what Singaravelu suggested. The house next to his, belonging to a Brahmin from Karnataka, was vacant; he arranged for me to stay there. I ate at his house, but Madras food affected my health even more adversely. My strength diminished day by day. Even so, I pursued my study of English vigorously. There was no one to teach me; I carried on with the help of a dictionary.

A Buddhist society called the 'Madras Mahabodhi Sabha' already existed in Madras, with Professor Lakshminarasu Naidu as president and Singaravelu as secretary. This Sabha did nothing other than celebrate Vaishakh Pournima—the day on which the Buddha received enlightenment. Money for this celebration was provided by the famous merchant of Burma, Mong Shwe. A number of Pariahs (Ati-Shudras [or 'untouchables']) had embraced Buddhism in Madras city. Their leader was Pandit Ayodhidas. But he and the members of the Mahabodhi Sabha did not get along. About two months after I came to Madras, all these Buddhists united. They rented a small house in Rayapet, named it Bauddhashram, and installed me there. From that time, discourses or lectures on Buddhism began to be held there every Sunday evening. Most of the time, I would read out a sutra in Pali and explain its meaning in my broken English; then Singaravelu would provide a discourse on it in Tamil. At times Professor Lakshminarasu also delivered lectures, and once in a while a guest speaker was invited.

The functioning of this society would have gladdened the heart of any Buddhist preacher. Many Hindus and Christians came every Sunday to listen to our discourses and lectures. Even the orthodox Brahmins of Madras sympathized with our society. But my mind was not focused on this activity at all—it continually raced towards a life lived in the forest. Besides, Madras food disagreed with me and the requirement of sleeping on the floor in Bauddhashram aggravated my rheumatism. At one point the members of the society made a plan to

buy me a cot, but it was never implemented. The floor was damp, so I would cover it with a cloth carpet and sleep on it. Because of these conditions, I was tired of Madras. Singaravelu was a strange man—at times he would say terrible things in a fit of temper. During a conversation, one day, he let go at the monks, saying all monks were as useless as Egyptian mummies (i.e. dead bodies embalmed and buried). I too told him off for having treated me like a captive. This argument did not sever our friendship, but I made a firm resolve to leave Madras.

It was impossible to get help to leave from the people of Madras, because Singaravelu opposed the idea. It thus became essential to find an alternative. There were some Burmese students living in Madras, who had come to see me a couple of times. They maintained that it was not proper for me to stay alone in Madras, lacking the company of other monks; and that if I went to any of the numerous viharas in Burma, it would facilitate my studies as well. I was convinced that these students would not help me to get to Calcutta, but they might be of assistance if I went to Burma. I made inquiries through Pandit Ayodhidas's son. They promised to collect a subscription and pay the steamer fare. So I made immediate preparations to leave for Burma.

At Madras I spent my days like an exiled prisoner. The only consolation was that I derived some benefit from the company of Professor Lakshminarasu. Professor Narasu would visit Bauddhashram every Friday at five in the afternoon and bring along some books for me. I learned from him for the first time how to make a comparative study. He brought me the *Rigveda* and other books from his college library, and gave me the benefit of his reading through our conversations. Besides, his conduct was exemplary; he had no addiction. He has always been open in his behaviour and abhors duplicity, and is counted as a leader among the reformers of Madras. It is natural to feel respect for such a person.

My friends in Ceylon gave me no monetary help at all, as I said. But the Venerable Premanand sent all my books to Madras by parcel post. These books were my only true friends, and very useful to me in Madras. Though I knew it would be difficult to take care of them on the journey to Burma, I decided to carry them with me all the same.

About the middle of October 1903—probably on the 12<sup>th</sup>—I left for Burma. Pandit Ayodhidas and others came to the harbour to see me



off. A Madras acquaintance of theirs was to go by the same steamer. Pandit Ayodhidas introduced me to him and told me that he would look after me during the voyage. Our steamer started at about 2 p.m. It was so crowded with labourers going to Burma that not an inch of space was left in the Third Class. Even the air was hard to get. Even so, the Madras labourers sang and chatted merrily. Barely an hour after the steamer started, the Madras gentleman with me started throwing up. I could not bear to see his distress. I went to the manager of the steamer and obtained permission for the two of us to sit on the upper deck. The gentleman found relief there. We encountered no further trouble on our voyage.

On the fourth or fifth day we reached Rangoon. On reaching the mouth of the Irrawaddy [or Irawati in Sanskrit] we saw the shining spire of the stupa called Shwe Dagon (golden *chaitya*). I had heard a great deal about this stupa, and was eager for a darshan. But first, it was necessary to find accommodation; so I was unable to go straight to the stupa for darshan. I do not remember clearly which vihara I went to from the harbour, but it was probably the Venerable Vichitra's vihara 'Ambarukkarama' on Godwin Road.

Either on the day I reached Rangoon or the next day, I went to see the Burmese scholar Mrs Laong, wife of the former accountant general. Mr Laong was the first Burmese man to learn English and achieve prominence; similarly his wife was the first Burmese woman to master English. This lady had profound faith in Buddhism. It may be said that an English education enhanced her faith instead of diminishing it. Mr Laong did not have much interest in religion, but never prevented his wife from spending generously on areas connected with it. Mrs Laong established a school for girls and even arranged for the religious education of the daughters of Buddhists. She gave alms generously to monks, especially to foreigners who had become monks. A learned Scotsman named Ananda Maitreya lived in Rangoon and received a great deal of help from Mrs Laong. There was also a German gentleman named Anthony Goethe who had come especially to make a study of Buddhism; this lady helped him generously too. Later he became a *shramaner* and went to live at the vihara called 'Chundo Chaun', in the town of Chimidain near Rangoon. Mrs Laong sent me to the same vihara, because the German *shramaner* Dnyana-trilok had become a

vegetarian at this time, so she thought the two of us would get on well together.

The rainy season was just over, but there was an occasional shower. In this season the natural beauty of Burma is unprecedented, with sheer green rice fields everywhere. Is there a foreigner who would not be delighted at such beautiful scenery seen from a hilltop? Besides, the Burmese people's boundless faith in Buddhism is expressed in this very season. From Ashwin Pournima to Kartik Pournima, monks are given alms at different places with great enthusiasm. The roads which monks take on their rounds to beg for food are decorated with flags and banners, and the sound of Burmese musical instruments fills the air. Repairs are made to stupas, *chaityas*, Buddhist temples, viharas, etc., during these days; as a result, all religious structures acquire a quite new appearance. Needless to say, this whole scene made me very happy.

But there was a limit to my happiness. I was not at all unhappy that I had come to Burma instead of going to Kushinara. But from the time I stepped into Rangoon it became difficult for me to find suitable food. The Burmese people, whether householders or monks, are confirmed non-vegetarians. Earlier, during the reign of Burmese kings, beef was prohibited. But this prohibition was removed under the British regime, and most people now eat beef. Wherever I went, the only food I received other than meat was rice. Therefore, I had to manage my meals with the help of rice and tinned condensed milk. At the Chundo Chaun Vihara, both Dnyana-trilok and I suffered continuously for almost three months on account of this. Of the food sent by lay followers for the monks in our vihara, we found nothing we could eat other than rice. So we were compelled to start boiling the leaves of trees in the vihara together with onions, and eat rice with this decoction.

The Venerable Kumara, the chief Acharya at Chundo Chaun, was very pleased with me. In Burma, *shramaners* are not valued at all. Young boys become *shramaners* and go back to their homes after a couple of days. After a week or so, they become *shramaners* again, if they wish. The Venerable Kumara did not think it right to let me remain a *shramaner*, in view of my knowledge of Pali. With the help of the Burmese gentleman Mong Shwe, he made preparations for my ordination [*upasampada*] and made me a monk [*bhikshu*]. After becoming a monk I spent only two months in Burma.

Now let me say a few words about my friend Dnyana-trilok (the German *shramaner*), and end this chapter. This gentleman was born into a good family. He was inclined towards religion from his childhood, and had run away once to a monastery of Catholic padres. Later, in his youth, he became a complete atheist through a study of the natural sciences. He developed a strong interest in music, and after finishing school, attained great proficiency in it. He could play the violin really well. During his journey to Burma, this instrument helped him a great deal. He would stop for a day or two in cities like Constantinople, Port Said, and Mumbai, play the violin in crowded places, earn money, and travel onward. Once he played the violin for half an hour at the band-stand in Mumbai, and the Europeans gathered there threw even currency notes at him! In half an hour he collected Rs 40. He was offered the job of a band-master somewhere in North India at Rs 800 per month. But he did not accept it as his mind was focussed on Buddhism. Dnyana-trilok did not tell me exactly why he was attracted to Buddhism, but I believe he developed an affinity with Buddhism after reading Schopenhauer and other German philosophers.

After reaching Rangoon, Anthony Goethe (the future Dnyana-trilok) threw away his violin and a boxful of songs, and started living as a *shramaner* at Chundo Chaun. With his sharp intelligence, he gradually acquired knowledge of Pali solely with the help of a dictionary and a grammar. I was of some help to him in this enterprise, but this was not very significant compared to his own efforts. He would always defend me. The Burmese called Indians '*kalaa*' (black). He could not bear anyone calling me that. He would say, 'The Buddha whom you venerate was also *kalaa*.' One day, when both of us had gone to the Shwe Dagon *chaitya* for a darshan, a Burmese gentleman asked us in English, 'When did you embrace our religion?' Dnyana-trilok asked him what he meant by 'our religion'. He replied, 'Our Burmese religion'. To this Dnyana-trilok replied, 'Buddhism is not a Burmese religion, but Indian. The Buddha was born in India; moreover, his religion was disseminated in India by Indians themselves. All ancient Pali literature was prepared by Indians. This being the case, it is quite wrong of you to call Buddhism a Burmese religion.'

The Burmese people are generally so ignorant of history that they have no knowledge at all of where Buddhism arose! I repeatedly told

Dnyana-trilok not to waste his time arguing with such people; but he could not let be. He would openly make fun of the way the Burmese pronounced Pali words. Before my ordination, when I was still a *shramaner*, we had to receive the Ten Rules from a monk in the vihara.<sup>72</sup> Aware of his Pali pronunciation, Dnyana-trilok started laughing beforehand. So I said, 'Look, if you laugh at the monk's pronunciation in his presence, he will feel very bad, and that might annoy the chief *sthavira* in our vihara.' When Dnyana-trilok promised not to laugh, we went to the monk. After the customary namaskar, etc., he began to recite the *sharana-gamana*: '*Buddham saranam gachchhami, Dhammam saranam gachchhami, Sangham saranam gachchhami.*' [I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.] The monk made a strange face and uttered the first sentence aloud as '*Buddhyam thyayanam gisami.*' Instead of repeating it, Dnyana-trilok went on laughing! The poor monk was quite abashed. After a while we somehow repeated the ten rules recited by the monk and returned to our room. Never again did we attempt to receive the rules.

#### 14. Pilgrimage to Buddhist Holy Places

The unsuitable food quite ruined my health. I began to suffer frequently from dysentery. So I thought of leaving Burma to go to Kushinara once again. Dnyana-trilok approved of my plan, but the Venerable Kumara did not like it at all. A belief prevails that it is inappropriate for a monk to leave before completing five years with his guru. This is not supported by the original *Tripitaka* texts. Commentators have frequently mentioned that disciples would stay in the guru's vihara for five years and complete their studies before leaving; but even this had many exceptions. The main issue is studies. Because I understood texts like *Vinaya* quite well, I claimed that Acharya should not mind my living wherever I found peace of mind. But most *sthaviras* in Burma were 'devotees' of the rule that 'Custom is stronger than the Shastras', and our guru was no exception. So it was not with an open mind that he gave me permission to visit Kushinara. He said I could go if I wanted. But without his help it would have been quite impossible to

<sup>72</sup> The Ten Rules are sometimes compared to the Ten Commandments. They are explained in *The Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha*.

obtain the steamer fare from Burmese lay followers. When I was ordained into the Sangha, the famous Burmese merchant of Moulmein, Mo Shwado, had spent a great deal of money; but this time, without the Venerable Kumara's permission, he would not spend even a cowrie shell [then treated as a 'coin' of practically the lowest denomination in India], as I well knew. Therefore I did not approach him for the fare. Some Buddhist merchants of Chittagong live in Rangoon and follow Bengali customs; the only difference is that they are Buddhist by religion. I was acquainted with them. One day I visited them and informed them of my plan to go to Kushinara. They gladly promised to give me Third Class steamer fare.

In a few days, I took my books and other belongings, and went from Rangoon to Calcutta. I do not remember the exact date, but have a vague recollection that I reached Calcutta at the beginning of January 1904. At the time Dharmapal was travelling in Japan, America, and other countries, and in his absence a young Sinhalese man named Anavaratna was given charge of managing the Mahabodhi Sabha. I heard later that he was very careless; but at the time I had no means of knowing this. I went to stay at the Sabha, but found it difficult to manage my meals from the first day. Anavaratna paid no attention to the matter, and I too was unconcerned about what might happen to me. Having a working knowledge of Hindustani, Sanskrit, and English, I was prepared to travel to any part of North India. Also, being prepared to manage with begged food, I was certain of managing problems on the way. If chance made me face starvation, I was ready to endure that as well. So I decided not to request the wealthy people of Calcutta for money, but to leave Calcutta on the second or third day, and go on foot to Mumbai. My plan was to catch a train if someone bought me a ticket, otherwise walk. There was no requirement of reaching a particular destination by a set date. My only objective was to get acquainted with the different parts of India and learn about people's customs and manners on the way.

The day after reaching Calcutta, I stitched myself a sling bag of cloth, and a large broadcloth robe [*chivara*], as worn by monks. I handed over all my books to Anavaratna—including the diary I had kept since I left Goa. I packed these well in paper, sealed them, and handed them over to him, impressing upon him the need to keep them

carefully. But his carelessness resulted in just that diary being lost! (Most of the books were returned to me by Dharmapal in 1907.) After all this preparation, I left Calcutta within a couple of days, early in the morning before sunrise, and, asking for directions, reached Howrah station. From there I walked slowly along the track of the Bengal–Nagpur railway. That day I subsisted on the bananas and bread I had carried in my sling bag. I do not remember where I spent the night. The next morning I reached Andul station. There was now nothing left in the sling bag, so that food became the first priority, and I went into the town.

I had heard that there was a generous lawyer named Shitalprasad there; perhaps the station master at Andul had told me so. At about eight in the morning, I went into town. Shitalprasad was sitting on his veranda talking to his tenant farmers. He inquired the purpose of my visit in Hindi, and I replied that it was only a meal. He must have thought I was joking! He asked whether I needed monetary help, but I told him firmly that I wanted nothing other than a meal, and that too before noon, in keeping with my rule. He agreed very gladly to provide a meal, saying, 'If that is all, you need go no further. Rest here and you will be served a meal before noon, to the best of my capacity.' So I stayed there instead of venturing elsewhere in Andul. At about eleven, he sent me with a servant to a newly constructed pond for a bath, and immediately thereafter made arrangements personally for my meal, which comprised many vegetables and other dishes cooked in the Bengali style. Afterwards he asked again if I would accept money, but I told him of my decision not to carry any, thanked him for the meal, and turned towards Andul station.

The station master and assistant station master at Andul were both Christians, but they treated me with great generosity. That morning, during the course of my conversation with the assistant station master, I had asked whether I could travel to Midnapore in the guard's cabin. He had said, 'Even if you travel by the Passenger, no one will stop you at Midnapore station—they will let you go as a holy man. Besides, I will tell a guard of my acquaintance to help you.' But I did not think it right to travel without a ticket. I said, 'I will go only if the guard accommodates me in his cabin, otherwise I will not travel in an ordinary compartment of the Passenger without a ticket.' Finally, he conveyed

my words to the station master himself, who too showed a great deal of sympathy for me but said that the guards of the Passenger would not allow me into their cabin. That afternoon a goods train was to leave Andul for Midnapore. The station master knew the guard of this train well, and said he would take me safely to Midnapore if I was prepared to travel by a goods train. I liked the idea and went off in that train to Midnapore. The guard was also Christian, I think, and treated me very cordially. He gave me his seat and travelled standing himself.

Upon reaching Midnapore I visited a couple of railway clerks of southern origin who lived at the station, but no help seemed forthcoming from them. So I started walking slowly along the road, going from the station into Midnapore town. Near the town I saw a carriage standing on the left of the road, with three or four Bengali gentlemen standing nearby. I asked them in Hindi whether it was the road into town. When they confirmed it was, I began walking on. But one of the men hastened towards me and asked whether I knew Sanskrit. I replied that I could speak Sanskrit well, and also English. He said, 'This carriage standing here belongs to our Rajasaheb. He is a great admirer of Sanskrit and has even written a book in Sanskrit.' I said, 'I have nothing to do with your Rajasaheb. But if he so desires, I don't mind talking to him in Sanskrit.'

Just then Rajasaheb came by. He was a Brahmin by caste, and his name was Krishnaprasad or something similar. He had a large estate in Midnapore District and a large house (known in Bengal as '*kacheri*') in the city of Midnapore. After a short conversation in Sanskrit, the raja asked me to come to his *kacheri* in his carriage. I told him to let me go on foot. He did not insist. Leaving behind one of the men in his retinue, he left. I reached Rajasaheb's *kacheri* after dark. He was to go away the next morning, and had to finish a lot of work that night. Without waiting up for him, I spread my robe in a nearby veranda, covered myself with another part of the robe, and went to sleep. Tired out by the journey, I fell fast asleep. At about eleven, a lawyer named Ghosh came and woke me up. Rajasaheb insisted that I eat something, but I explained to him that I did not eat after midday. He then insisted on my accompanying him to his village the following day. But my travel plans had already been made, and I could not agree. He told his staff to buy my ticket to Nagpur, and left for his village. The following day I ate at the house of the lawyer Ghosh and went to the station with

a man sent by Rajasaheb. He bought my ticket with the subscription collected by Rajasaheb and his friends, and, with the remaining money, bought sweetmeats for me to eat on the way.

The next afternoon I reached Nagpur. Having appeased my hunger with sweetmeats, I had no worry about my meal. The only problem was finding accommodation and managing the following day. From the station I went into the city and found it ravaged by the plague. People had abandoned their homes and fled beyond the city, making it difficult to find shelter. I met a couple of Bania Vanis, or some such persons, and they said among themselves, 'This man seems to be an Arya Samajist! There is no one here who holds with such views! Only Madhavrao Padhye will welcome him.' One of them turned to me and said, 'Go to Madhavrao Padhye, the lawyer, who has gone to stay outside the city. He will arrange things for you.' I went looking for Padhye, the lawyer, and reached his tent at about 6 p.m. He was away to conduct a case and was expected back by the night train. His younger brother asked me what I wanted with him, and many other questions. Without bothering to reply in detail, I told him in brief, 'I do not have a specific errand. My only purpose in coming here is to find shelter for a day and to meet Madhavrao.' He offered me food, but I said I did not eat in the evening, and went to sleep on my robe outside their tent.

Shri Padhye, the lawyer, arrived by train the same night and must have heard about me. But he did not wake me up. The next morning he got up a little late, and we met then. I told him everything candidly, including my being a Buddhist. He supported reform and was therefore not unhappy about my conversion. He said, 'Even the Buddha was one of our great sages in ancient times. I do not think that adherence to his teachings means religious conversion. A Japanese monk named Mr Okakura had come here, and he too stayed with me. Now, instead of wandering unnecessarily, you should rest quietly here, and perform whatever religious reflections you want right here.'

I thought it desirable to spend a few days at Nagpur. Shri Padhye pitched a small tent for me. Inside I made myself a bed of grass to sleep on. There were a few families living near Padhye's tent; each of them gave me a little food as alms. Padhye had given me a shallow earthen bowl in which I ate. I had a water vessel for my bath water and another for storing water. I had a bowl for water to rinse my mouth with. In

sum, what I experienced was fulfilment of Acharya Shantideva's righteous wish:

*Oh for a time when I would move about fearlessly, carrying along as my only wealth an earthen pot and a monk's robe which is of no use to a thief!* [Skt.]

My 'cloth hut' was located at quite a distance from the tents of Shri Padhye and the others. The spot was not very safe as regards snakes, wild animals, and thieves, but I would fearlessly wander around at night and sleep on the grass. I spent more than a week there, but it was impossible to stay permanently. I could not have stayed on in the woods after Shri Padhye went back into town, because it would require me to walk back and forth almost five miles to beg for food. So I formed a plan to travel from Nagpur to Mumbai, and then to Kushinara, and informed Padhye. He suggested that I go direct from Nagpur to Benares. But I said, 'This time I want to visit the Mumbai region once. I have stayed at Pune, but have not seen Mumbai. I also want to see Amravati which is close to this place.' Without arguing much, Padhye gave me a letter of introduction to Shri Govind Narayan Kane, a lawyer in Amravati, and bought me a ticket to that city the following day.

I reached Amravati in the middle of the night. Not wishing to disturb Shri Kane so late, I went to sleep on the floor of the Third Class waiting room at the station. This caused dysentery the following day and I suddenly fell ill. In the morning I found the house of Kane, the lawyer. He received me hospitably; moreover, he introduced me to Shri Dadasaheb Khaparde and others.<sup>73</sup> The group insisted on my delivering a lecture on Buddhism, so I spoke about 'The Buddha's Middle Path' at the Theosophical Lodge there. Shri Khaparde chaired the meeting and spoke favourably about Buddhism. The lecture seemed to go down well on the whole, although I had been worried because this was the first time I spoke in Marathi.

Shri Kane assumed all the responsibility for me. Whether he paid for my ticket himself or through a subscription, I could not discover. He wrote in advance about my expected arrival to Shri Hari Sitaram

<sup>73</sup> G.S. alias Dadasaheb Khaparde was a renowned lawyer of Vidarbha and a prominent social and political reformer. He was a close associate of 'Lokamanya' B.G. Tilak.

Dikshit, Solicitor, at Mumbai, and sent him a telegram before I left Amravati. Even this did not satisfy him, and he said, 'If you don't mind, I will keep remitting whatever money I can for your wife and daughter.' I expressed my gratitude for his generosity but refused to accept a donation. I satisfied him by saying that my brother-in-law was a doctor and quite capable of supporting his sister, so there was no need for him to worry unnecessarily.

I spent at the most four days in Amravati. Then I went to Mumbai, and, changing trains at Dadar, went directly to Bandra.<sup>74</sup> Shri Dikshit had sent his carriage to the station along with a man who took me home. That day there was a special celebration at Dikshit's house, or perhaps he had invited friends to lunch because it was a Sunday; I do not clearly remember. I found Shri Damodar Ganesh Padhye and others there. I had a long conversation with him on Vedanta. There was also one Shri Dabholkar who expressed unhappiness at my religious conversion. He was very sorry especially because a bright man had been alienated from the Saraswat community and because the community had lost him!

The following day Dikshit took me to Mumbai city and sent me with a relative in a rented carriage to see the sights. This meant there was no reason to spend more time in the city. That same night I caught the train to Baroda. Shri Dikshit had written in advance about me to a friend of his there, Shri Ramchandra Hari Gokhale. Dikshit came to the station, bought my ticket, and saw me into the 11 p.m. train.

The next morning Shri Gokhale was at Baroda station when the train arrived. He recognized me by my clothes and took me home in his carriage. The meal and other arrangements at his place were excellent, but I did not need to stay more than a day. So I decided to go to Ujjain by the night train. Gokhale came to the station and bought my ticket to Ujjain. He offered me some money as well, which I declined.

Ujjain was visited by the plague at this time. My old friends, such as Kelkar the schoolteacher, lived outside the town. I somehow

<sup>74</sup> Dadar is located in the north of the island city of Mumbai and Bandra lies in the suburbs on Salsette Island immediately to the north of Mumbai Island across a creek.

managed to trace them and stayed either in his hut or in the tent of Shri Dhekane, the then principal of Madhav College, I do not clearly remember. The guru of all these people was a religious mendicant named Sheelnath at Dewas. They all insisted that I should see him, so I walked the twenty-four-mile distance to Dewas. But I did not find in the buva the intense piety described by the group of graduates!

A cave had been prepared for him on a small hillock outside which burned a huge smoke-fire. I went and sat near him without doing namaskar, which probably irked the buva, as well as his disciples! I asked him some questions to which he returned incoherent answers—making me suspect that he was under the influence of opium! I had brought a homemade snack and had also eaten before noon on the way; in the evening I did not eat at all. At about seven, Sheelnath's disciples conducted a ritual worship of the smoke-fire and blew a conch-shell. The prayer chanted at this time was addressed to Sheelnath himself! It seemed as if the disciples considered Sheelnath a god! Whatever the case, I did not care much for all this.

The next day I ran into Shri Gangadhar-shastri, headmaster of the English school at Dewas, who was particularly interested in the dissemination of education. I do not recall how or where I met him. But he requested me to come to his house for a meal which would be served before noon, in keeping with my rule. At about eleven, I went to his house; and in the afternoon I delivered a lecture in his school. On the whole, I found my meeting with Gangadhar-shastri much more fruitful than my meeting with Sheelnath during my visit to Dewas.

From Dewas I went to Indore in accordance with a plan already made in Ujjain. Shri Kelkar had written about me to Shri Ketkar, headmaster at Indore. Accordingly he made me stay with him for a day, and sent me back with a ticket to Ujjain. Principal Dhekane, Shri Kelkar, and others collected a subscription and sent me on to Gwalior. There I went to Dr Wagle's house. He was delighted to see me after a gap of four years, but did not seem to care for my monk's robes. Even so, he was not in any way remiss in offering me hospitality. After staying with him for a day or two, I started for Kashi. He had urgent work at the palace, and could not come to the station. So he sent his nephew to buy a ticket for me. He handed over the ticket and offered me a handful of money. I did not even ask whether it was 10 rupees or

20. I only told him that I did not want to touch the money, so he should take it back and give it to his uncle.

I had read that a small rest-house had been built for Buddhists at Sarnath. Accordingly I turned towards the place after getting down at the Cantonment station. A *shramaner* named Sumedhankar lived there. He gave me food, but told me that the rest-house was not yet completed, so I could not be accommodated. I asked, 'What is the fare to Kushinara, and how can I collect the money for it?' The fare to the station named Tehsil Dauriya near Kushinara was a rupee and a few annas. Sumedhankar paid it himself and sent me onward.

I reached Tehsil Dauriya in the morning. Kushinara is twenty-three miles from there. The road is straight, but I was worried about procuring food on the way. However, there was no point waiting at the station, so I started walking. It was almost noon when I had walked about six miles, so I went to a Kshatriya zamindar in a nearby village, who received me hospitably. After eating, I walked on. I spent the night at a blacksmith's house, and reached Kushinara the following morning.

This place is two miles from the taluka headquarters named Kasaya in the district of Gorakhpur. At present it is known as 'Matha Kunwarka Kot'. The ignorant people of the surrounding area marvel greatly at the image of the Buddha there. They know nothing about the history of the place. I mentioned earlier that the monk Mahavir had there built a dharmashala with help from the Burmese merchant Shri Khejari. Mahavir lived in the same dharmashala. An elderly Brahmin from the north who had become a Buddhist monk also lived therein. Shri Khejari had appointed a Burmese man to take care of the dharmashala and the monks. The monk Mahavir received me hospitably and gave me a room to stay in. I was there for about two weeks, but my meditation was constantly interrupted.

Outside my room was hung (Ravi Varma's) picture of Vishwamitra and Menaka. People from the surrounding villages would come to see the dharmashala and laugh out loud at the picture. I told them many times not to laugh, but to no avail—there were new visitors every day. So I told the monk Mahavir to either remove the picture or hang it elsewhere, to prevent disturbance. But he did not think it the proper thing to do as the picture had been put there by Khejari's man. I turned it round the wrong way; but the Burmese man turned it the right way

again. My main objective in coming to Kushinara was to get peace of mind, but this little picture prevented my finding it. There was no alternative but to leave the dharmashala.

One day the monk Mahavir and I had a heated argument over this matter, and I took the opportunity to leave the dharmashala. Behind the Buddha temple was a wild tree growing out of a dilapidated building; I cleared out a small space under it and began living there. The first day I went into Kasaya and ate at the house of a lawyer. But from the next day, the monk Mahavir began to send food to my dwelling place so that I had no worry about begging for food.

I reached Kushinara on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1904. I spent about two weeks in the dharmashala, and more than two months under the tree. Over my entire life, these days were the first that I spent in absolute solitude. This was where I first encountered the manifestation of fear that Lord Buddha has described in his *Bhaya-bhairava-sutra*. There Lord Buddha says: 'O monks, on the eighth and fourteenth day as well as on *pournima* and *amavasya* of every month, I would stay in a place which was supposed to be haunted by ghosts and spirits. At night a peacock would drop a dried twig from a tree, an animal would creep near, or the breeze would rustle through the leaves. At such times I would be overcome by fear. If I happened to be walking about at such a time, I would conquer fear while walking; if I happened to be standing, I would conquer fear while standing; if I happened to be sitting, I would conquer fear while sitting; and if I happened to be lying in bed when I felt fear, I would conquer it in that very state.' I had occasion to experience things described in this and many other sutras. At night mongooses or wolves would run over dry leaves and give me gooseflesh. But whenever I felt fear, I would conquer it in the same state.

The monk Mahavir had given me a carpet to spread on the ground. One night I was sleeping upon it under the same tree; at about midnight, I got up to relieve myself. When I returned, something like a stick lay at the edge of the carpet. I was suspicious and snapped my fingers, at which a snake slithered away. From that day I started sleeping on a raised platform outside the Buddha temple. Because it was raised, the danger of snakes getting into my bedding was reduced. But it had no shelter, such as a tree, so that my covering sheet would be drenched by dew at night; and the floor of the platform—made of lime—made me cold as well.

In a nearby village lived a sadhu named Murti who was an adherent of the Kabir sect. He would visit me frequently to discuss religion. I would explain to him the types of Buddhist meditation, etc. One night we decided to go to a cremation ground two miles away, and actually spent the whole night there. This cremation ground was of course inhabited by animals such as wolves and jackals. Human limbs and bones lay scattered everywhere and rendered the place even more terrifying. I collected a human skull and other bones and meditated upon them a few days.

It was not as if I was unaccustomed to wandering about in woods and forests. Our village of Sankhwal is still forested. Even now one hears tigers roaring after sunset, quite a few times a year. I have often wandered about in this village at night. I did not even mind walking past the cremation ground. But my frame of mind would be different at the time—I would have a piece of wood and a scythe in my hand to repulse snakes, tigers, ghosts and spirits, and thieves; and I would ever be in readiness to attack a tiger. The situation at Kushinara was quite different. Here I had to repulse external enemies like wolves and jackals with renunciation and tranquillity. Therefore, if I felt that a wolf had come at night, I did not rush to drive it away. I would sit quietly, resolved to let the creature devour my body if that would satisfy its hunger. In sum, the opportunity for a certain kind of religious experience that I got in the vicinity of Kushinara must be said to be unprecedented.

In April 1904, Dharmapal returned to Calcutta after a trip to Japan, America, etc. Then he went to Kashi to try setting up an industrial school. Upon getting a letter or two from him, I decided to go to Kashi to meet him and went off at the end of April. There I spent a week or two under a banyan tree near the Buddhist dharmashala. Dharmapal came over to meet me from the city. The same day, there was a fair at Sarnath. On the spot where Guru Buddha expounded his teaching stood a large stupa built by King Ashoka. Many who had assembled for the fair came to see this. Dharmapal said to me, 'These people probably don't know the history of this place, so you should explain it.' I said, 'I will not succeed, and it will be an unnecessary bother.' But when he insisted, I climbed a mound near the stupa and addressed the people: 'Most of you probably don't know the history of the stupa. It was first built by Emperor Ashoka.' When I started to tell them all this,

someone in the crowd interrupted me in Hindi, 'What a yarn you're spinning! We've always heard it is an oil-presser's mill!' I tried to convince the man by arguments—that oil-mills were never so large, that there was no historical evidence to support his view. This annoyed his companion who said, 'What nonsense! What our forefathers told us is false, and your history is true? An oil-presser built this oil-mill and he used to jump on it.' That was that! It was the end of my speech. The audience burst out laughing, convinced that I was defeated!

Finally a man there, a retired engineer, said to Dharmapal, 'There's no point telling our people ancient history. You've visited countries like America and Japan. If you speak of the people and industries there, it might have some effect.' When Dharmapal agreed to speak, the gentleman climbed on the mound and made a speech to introduce Dharmapal. Then he translated Dharmapal's speech into Hindi. I think it did not have the effect that was hoped for. But it must be counted as our good fortune that the people listened quietly!

I felt extremely dejected by the pitiable ignorance of people in the country in which Buddhism grew, and whose inhabitants carried the banner of that religion from India to countries like China. Forget their ignorance of Buddhism: in other matters also the people of the region of Kashi-Kushinara are considerably worse informed than people in Maharashtra or Bengal. There may be a few *shastris* and pandits in the city of Kashi; but a couple of miles outside the city the villages are steeped in terrible ignorance. I don't know if there has been any improvement over the last decade or so. But at that time the people of North India were much more backward than those in our region, and even large towns lacked primary education. Village Brahmins could not read or write! To be able to sign one's name was regarded as a sign of higher education! In ancient times this Middle Region was in the forefront of every advance.<sup>75</sup> Is there a patriot who would not be disheartened at the sight of its pitiable state today?

A Jain temple exists near the banyan tree under which I lived. Long platforms have been built outside it, and on these I slept at night. The

<sup>75</sup> The Middle Region was a distinct part of North India; its approximate boundaries are described in footnote 34 of *The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha*, included in translation in the present volume.

priest of the Jain temple lived in a dharmashala close by, and a man from a nearby village had been appointed by the Archaeological Survey of India at a salary of about Rs 4 per month to prevent people carrying off stones from there. At times he told me that there were dreadful ghosts and spirits around the temple, which is why people were afraid to pass by it after dark. He advised me to sleep in the dharmashala instead, but I did not leave the place.

The North Indian summers are extreme. One afternoon, when I was sitting under the banyan tree, a labourer digging on the other side of the temple walked past the Jain dharmashala carrying water in an earthen vessel. I asked him to pour some water into my small water pot, but he humbly said, 'Sir, I cannot do what you ask.' I assumed the reason for his refusal was that by parting with a little water en route he would annoy the other labourers. So I said, 'Don't give me water if it is going to cause you any trouble.' He put down the water vessel, bowed down at my feet, and said, 'Sir, what trouble can be caused by giving away a little water? But the truth is that I belong to the Chambhar caste. I have no wish to sin by giving water to an upper-caste man such as yourself.' I said, 'Rohidas was also a Chambhar; even so, people of all castes revered him. Besides, I don't believe in caste distinctions. I have no wish to know your caste. All I want is water, and it would be enough if you give me some.' I admonished him a lot in this vein. He made no response. He bowed down at my feet once again and said, 'Admonish me as much as you want. Or, if you think I'm guilty, cut my throat right here. But do not ask me to commit this sin!' In the end I was compelled to go to the well in the garden of the Jain temple and get water from the priest there.

This single incident demonstrates the difference between the lower classes in countries like Europe and America, and people like Mahars and Mangs here, and also the effort required to bring Western reforms to this country. The poor in Western countries do not feel they are lowly because of a universal law. They are convinced that they are in an inferior position because of the artificial structure of society, and that a change in this structure should result in their advancement. But people like the Mahars and Mangs in our country think the state into which they are born is appropriate; and they are likely to foolishly believe that reformers transgress religion. It is not wise to attack their



foolish beliefs—formed through the social conditioning of thousands of years—unless education is first disseminated among these people. It is futile to hope for uplift of the backward classes until something like compulsory education starts in India.

After spending a week or two under the tree, I went to stay in Dharmapal's bungalow in Kashi Cantonment. There again I spent two weeks and, at the beginning of June, went at Dharmapal's suggestion to stay in Buddhagaya. A monk named M.P. Sumangal who lived there had gone away. Dharmapal had dismissed him on suspicion of his private conduct and handed over charge to a Sinhalese lay follower. This lay follower treated me extremely well. Dharmapal would send him money for monthly expenses directly, and he would keep an account. I did not need to arrange for meals or anything else. After my meal, at about three o'clock, I would sit under a tree on the sandy bank of the Nairanjara and practise meditation, etc., as described in Buddhist texts.

It would not be inappropriate to give a little information about this place. Lord Buddha, when he was still in the Bodhisattva stage, practised severe austerities for six years in the vicinity of Buddhagaya. He subsisted for days just on decoction of lentils such as moong, he fasted for days, he tried everything—yet he could not obtain nirvana. Therefore he abandoned the path of self-mortification and gradually started to eat food. However, this greatly saddened the group of five monks who lived with him. Thinking that Gautama, whom they had regarded as a guru, had turned out a hypocrite, they left Buddha-guru and went off to Varanasi. Our Bodhisattva stayed on and, partaking of the food required by his body, continued to reflect upon religion.

On the day of Vaishakh Pournima, he partook of the sweet milk dish offered by a Kshatriya girl named Sujata, and sat at night in meditation under the peepul tree that now leans against the Buddha temple at Buddhagaya. (Legend has it that the tree under which the Buddha had sat was felled by a wicked king. But at present a tree has sprouted there from the original one.) That night Bodhisattva acquired knowledge of the essence of religion, and after defeating the entire army of Mara [the tempter], he became perfectly enlightened before dawn. The texts give an enthralling account of Bodhisattva's battle with Mara. In any case, this place probably acquired a great deal of importance after the passing away [Parinirvana] of Buddha-guru. Kings and affluent people

built many temples, stupas, and viharas here. Excepting the main temple, most of the other structures have disappeared into the belly of the earth. Legend has it that in the fifth century AD the famous King Mahanama of Sinhala-dvipa built a large vihara here, with gold designs inside, inset with pearls and rubies. The site of this vihara is pointed out even now, but nothing is visible except a mound of earth.

The main temple was headed for the same state. Banyan and other trees had grown out of the temple and a part of the spire had collapsed. The open ground around it was filling up, and the temple was about to vanish into the belly of the earth. But in the winter of 1876 King Mindo Min of Burma sent a mission, consisting of three Burmese officials, to Buddhagaya to get the temple repaired. The mission started the repairs in consultation with the Mahant there. But the British government did not like it, being afraid that the king of Burma would spend a great deal of money and introduce radical changes, and they therefore objected to King Mindo Min's mission. Later the two courts corresponded and resolved that the British government would get the temple repaired without altering the original design, while the expenses would be borne by the king of Burma. Accordingly, the repairs were carried out under the supervision of a British engineer. On the same occasion, the government commissioned Dr Rajendralal Mitra to collect all the information about Buddhagaya and publish it in a book. It also appointed a custodian to keep an eye on the [Buddha] image and other ancient artefacts there.

King Mindo Min built a small dharmashala there and retained a couple of Burmese monks as his representatives; he also sent several gem-studded articles for ritual worship of the Buddha. The land on which the temple stood was in possession of the Mahant there; but he and the Burmese monks were never at odds. In January 1886, the British government dethroned King Thebaw and annexed Burma. The Buddhist monks at Buddhagaya now lost their patronage and were compelled to return to their homeland. The gem-studded pots, etc. donated by King Mindo Min came into the Mahant's possession, and are still with him. From this time the Mahant realized the value of the desolate temple and started extending his control over it.

In 1891 Dharmapal arrived from Ceylon along with Colonel Olcott on a pilgrimage to Buddhist holy places. Dharmapal was extremely unhappy at the wretched state of the Buddhagaya temple.

Neither a monk nor anyone else was seeing to its upkeep, so that the open ground around it had been gradually overgrown; and this had become a place where the villagers relieved themselves! Little children went into the temple and played to their heart's content on the pedestal of the Buddha image, and ruined the structure by throwing stones at it. The Mahant had stationed a guard there—but only in name, for he paid no attention whatsoever to protecting the temple! His attention was focused on offerings made by Buddhist pilgrims to the Buddha image! This wretched state drew Dharmapal's attention to this extremely holy site of the Buddhists; and upon returning to his homeland he established a society, called the Mahabodhi Sabha, for the improvement of the temple.

In 1893 Dharmapal attended the Congress of Religions at Chicago in America, as secretary of the Mahabodhi Sabha. This enhanced his influence among Europeans and Indians. On his way back from America, he went to Japan and brought along an exquisite Buddha image from an ancient temple there. His intention was to instal it on the upper floor of the temple at Buddhagaya. But the Mahant came to hear of this and opposed it. This Buddha image just lay around in the city of Gaya for a year or more. Finally, one day, Dharmapal took it, installed it on the upper floor at Buddhagaya at dawn, and started worshipping it along with two monks. On hearing of this, the Mahant sent his disciples and created a great commotion; they picked up the image and threw it out! There was a great deal of agitation at the time, not only in Buddhagaya but also in Gaya city. The magistrate of Gaya, Mr Macpherson, sent the police to protect Dharmapal and the image.

During this agitation some friends advised Dharmapal to sue the Mahant. But some wise persons, like my guru Shri Sumangalacharya, president of the Mahabodhi Sabha, were opposed to a lawsuit. Even so, they sent a Sinhalese barrister from Ceylon to Gaya to inquire into the matter. He too was of the opinion that litigation was not advisable. However, Dharmapal filed a suit against the Mahant, with the support of his Indian and British friends. The Mahant, being very wealthy, brought the famous barrister Manmohan Ghosh especially from Calcutta to plead on his behalf. But in the end Macpherson Saheb confirmed the rights of the Buddhists and penalized the four disciples of the Mahant. The Mahant appealed to the District Judge who confirmed some of the sentences and slightly altered some. Manmohan Ghosh

took the case to the Calcutta High Court, and began an agitation through the Indian and English press at Calcutta. Barrister Ghosh adopted the position that the decision of the magistrate and district judge of Buddhagaya was about to destroy the Hindu religion! Given the strange beliefs about Buddhism at the time, it did not take long for animosity to develop against Dharmapal. Ultimately the High Court case came up before Justice Bannerji as well as the Chief Justice. They admitted in their decision that the Buddhists had an uninterrupted right to offer worship, etc. in the temple at Buddhagaya, but no right to instal a new image there without the Mahant's permission. Thus they reversed the decision of the lower courts and exonerated the Mahant's disciples.

Dharmapal incurred huge expenses on this court case and lost the fund of Rs 30,000 to 40,000 collected by the Mahabodhi Sabha. This prejudiced Buddhists in Ceylon and elsewhere against him. He now found it difficult to get money from Ceylon for work related to the Mahabodhi Sabha. The Burmese people, however, retained their faith in him and helped him generously even after the court case. The Mahant became very antagonistic towards Dharmapal. He had agreed to give Dharmapal land for a new dharmashala; even the deed of sale had been prepared. But the moment the Mahant heard of Dharmapal's intended opposition, he stopped the document being registered. Hostilities increased and culminated in the law suit mentioned above.

It would not be inappropriate now to briefly narrate how this Shaivite monk of Buddhagaya acquired rights over the Buddhist temple. Before Shah Jahan's reign, a sanyasi from Punjab, belonging to the Shaiva sect known as Giri, came to stay near the temple. The area was uninhabited at the time. The nearby vihara and other structures had collapsed and been covered by a dense forest. It was said snakes were to be found in plenty, and even wild animals like tigers. The sanyasi built his hut on the river bank in this uninhabited area. Gradually, his fame spread to the surrounding villages, and he acquired a large group of disciples. One of his disciples, who was at the court of Shah Jahan, exerted his influence to obtain for the sanyasi a gift of two villages near the temple. Since that time the chief disciple of the sanyasi came to be called 'Mahant'. The Mahant built for himself and his disciples a large *math* with the bricks and stones of dilapidated structures near the temple. He made use of most of the carved pillars in the enclosing wall

built by King Ashoka around the temple, and set many Buddha images, with their faces turned around, in the walls of the *math* and the enclosing wall! Lord Curzon passed an act for the preservation of ancient artefacts, which compelled the Mahant to replace the Ashokan pillars. But many Buddha and Bodhisattva images have still been swallowed up by the walls of the Mahant's *math*! This place clearly demonstrates how incredible is the cycle of Time!

Ever since the Mahant's rights were established in this fashion, the situation has become very strange. Afraid that the Buddhists would wrest his rights with the help of the government, he is always suspicious of them. The government does not wish to interfere and does not have a firm policy. Because Buddhists worship the Buddha image, the Mahant put a huge three-lined [Hindu sectarian] mark on the image and transformed the Buddha into Vishnu's ninth incarnation—and appointed a Brahmin to carry on a worship ritual in accordance with the Smritis, Shrutis, and Puranas!<sup>76</sup> The Mahant thought that he could thereby prevent Buddhists from entering the temple. But the government did not allow his strategy to continue, and compelled him to keep the temple open to Buddhists—but continued the Mahant's practice of putting the three-lined mark on the image! The Buddha was a sanyasi and did not wear sectarian marks, garlands, and such things. So the Buddhists are dejected seeing this mark. The Mahant is also unhappy because his objective was not completely achieved. And the government too is troubled by one or the other faction, through occasional criticism or in other ways. Angry with the government, the Mahant filed a lawsuit against the State Secretary and Dharmapal to gain possession of the Burmese dharmashala. Similarly, Dharmapal severely criticizes the government through newspapers for granting the Mahant permission to put a mark on the Buddha image. In sum, the powers of the Mahant, the Buddhists, and the government converge here, and as a result it would not be possible to obtain today the peace that had reigned at the time of the Buddha and for centuries afterwards!

I went to meet the Mahant once or twice. He received me most cordially. He also offered to send me groceries every day, but I did not need them. I said, 'I thank you for your offer of a gift, but I do not need

<sup>76</sup> The Smritis are Dharmashastras and the Shrutis are the Vedic lore.

it at the moment. The people of this village are totally ignorant, and it is your duty as a religious teacher to help towards their education. The large donations made to you by kings and wealthy people are intended not merely to help the needy, but also to disseminate education and knowledge in the country. In Japan, Buddhist monks exert themselves a great deal for the dissemination of education. The religious head of the Buddhist sect known as "Singanji" has sent his own son to England for an education. But your disciples, after leaving home and renouncing the world, seem to do nothing other than cultivating fields! Be that as it may, even your own place of residence does not have a single Hindi school for poor people. Is this state not regrettable? When the wealthy of Japan, Europe, America, and other countries visit this place, children here beg from them, strike their stomachs [to indicate their hunger], and fall at their feet! They even prostrate themselves before the visitors' carriages! We Indians ought to regard this behaviour as extremely shameful! Especially because you consider yourself to be the head here, you are to a large extent responsible for these children's behaviour. You should keep this in mind!

For quite a while I spoke in this vein, but the Mahant did not mind. On the contrary, he expressed his agreement. He said he would help towards opening a school, or at least think about it. But for a month he did not give me a definite reply. At the time a government custodian, Mr Bose, was there and I asked him to make inquiries with the Mahant. Upon inquiring, he explained the matter thus: 'The Mahant does not think it desirable to open a school for the people here, because if these people are educated they will be ashamed to work as labourers, and this will greatly inconvenience the Mahant—he would have to bring people from elsewhere to till his fields!'

No matter if the Mahant was not prepared to help, I thought I should make the effort myself. With this intention, I asked the Sinhalese lay follower to be frugal in our expenses and put some money aside. I also wrote to Dharmapal to help towards the school. There was an Indian traditional teacher there who taught for a fee. I offered him 5 rupees per month to teach all the poor children free of charge; he too agreed. But the children's guardians were so beggarly that they would not buy even slates, pencils, and primers. So I sent the lay follower to Gaya and bought primers and other things. When the Mahant heard

of this, he mounted quite an opposition! The teacher's brother worked as a clerk for the Mahant. The Mahant threatened to drive him and his brother out of Buddhagaya, if the [teacher] brother taught the children free of charge! The poor teacher was frightened and told me plainly that he was unable to honour his agreement with me. So I distributed the slates, pencils, and books among the children in his school, and gave up.

[The story goes that] once a deer was wounded by a hunter's arrow. With great effort it removed the arrow and ran into the forest; but the trail of blood enabled the hunter to find it. As the deer was about to die, it said, 'This same blood that nourished me until now has, by my misfortune, been the cause of my destruction!' One cannot help saying the same about sanyasis and others who are regarded as the propagators of religion! In the age before printing, sanyasis were the walking-talking books of our country. Free of the preoccupations of a family, they travelled everywhere, and acquired and disseminated knowledge. What brilliance Bharat-bhumi had attained at the time is testified to by Chinese travellers like Hiuen Tsang and Fa-hien in their travelogues. But these same sanyasis are impeding our progress today! And it would not be inaccurate to say that to an extent it is they who are responsible for our distressing condition.

Naturally, I did not like to live under these conditions arising from the Mahant's customary rights. But I could not leave because it was the rainy season. I spent these two or three months reading the *Tripitaka* text printed in the Siamese script. Only in the evening did I sit on the bank of the Nairanjara; I spent the rest of the time reading.

After the end of the four rainy months, we three—the lay follower, Anavaratna, and I—went to see Rajagriha. This place is sixteen miles from the East India Railway's station called Tilayya. This was the capital city of the region of Magadha during the Buddha's time. It is surrounded by Gridhrakut, Pandav, Vaibhar, and other hills. There is a hot-water spring on the way in; in the Buddha's time it was known as 'Tapodaa'. At a little distance is a cave named 'Sapta-parni'. This was where, after the Buddha's Parinirvana, the Venerable Mahakashyapa called an assembly of five hundred monks and collected the Buddha's teachings, such as *Dharma* and *Vinaya*. Legend has it that, for this assembly, King Ajatashatru had erected a large awning at the entrance to the cave. Only a few years after the Buddha, Rajagriha started to

decline. The Nanda kings moved their capital to Pataliputra, which led to Rajagriha being deserted. Even now it is a desolate place. A sanyasi of the Udasin sect has constructed his *math* in a nearby village; but he is not connected with this place, as the Mahant is with Buddhagaya. The king of Magadha had a palace here. That site is now claimed to be the palace of Jarasandha, and the hot-water spring is given a similar mythological name by Brahmins who extort money from pilgrims! However, this place has not attained the importance that Gaya has. We spent a day there and returned to Buddhagaya. The lay follower and I then went to Kushinara.

Winter was about to set in, so I constructed a small hut out of my robe at my earlier spot, positioned a cot in it, and started living there. My solitary life had been disturbed by spending the four rainy months at Buddhagaya. Frequent news of the undesirable deeds of the Mahant and his disciples disrupted my calm. So I nurtured the hope of spending at least seven or eight months in solitude again. At the time a young Burmese monk named Chandramuni lived at Kushinara. Khejari had spent a great deal of money to enable him to learn Sanskrit and Hindi; and he was to look after the dharmashala at Kushinara, succeeding the monk Mahavir. He advised me saying if I wanted to spend time in solitude, I should go to Mandalay. [He said] there was a hill named Sagaing near the town with numerous caves where monks engaged in meditation lived.<sup>77</sup> Chandramuni had recently arrived from Burma, so I believed him, and formed a plan to go to Burma again. However, first I had to spend another month at Kushinara.

It is believed that people there are given to thieving. When the monk Mahavir came from Tehsil Dauriya carrying Rs 1,500 for the dharmashala, robbers stopped him on the way, toppled his carriage, and stole his money bag. Before the dharmashala was built, the monk Mahavir and a disciple of his lived in a hut. One night a thief broke in and stole a silk robe kept under the monk Mahavir's pillow! On another occasion, thieves broke the lock of the Buddha temple, stole the costly apparel put on the Buddha image by a prince of Cambodia, and buried it in a field! The police traced it after six months.

Although the people were such—besides being quite inimical to

<sup>77</sup> Sagaing, a centre of Buddhist monasteries, lies 20 km south-west of Mandalay, on the opposite bank of the river.

Buddhists—their behaviour towards me was quite different. I would leave my robes and my begging bowl around, but nobody ever touched them. After I returned to Kushinara, the villagers would invite me home with great affection and feed me. For a long time I was unable to understand why they behaved so with me. One day, while returning from a peasant's house after a meal, I happened to drop on the way a small towel used for drying hands. A boy picked it up and gave it to his mother. On hearing about this, the neighbours scolded the woman: 'Do you intend to steal that buva's cloth and invite a great calamity upon the village?' The poor woman came running to me at once in the midday sun, touched my feet, and said, 'This cloth was lying on the path and my son took it, not knowing it was yours. Please forgive me. The people in my village are blaming me unnecessarily for theft.' I gave the cloth back to her and told a peasant there not to bother the old woman or her son, because I had given it of my own free will. Another peasant came to me and said, 'You live in this forest alone at night. What can one say to this? We do not dare even to walk alone here after sunset, because dreadful deities dwell here.' I said, 'It is not possible that such deities will harm me. They will protect me if possible, or leave me alone—but not harm me.' These two incidents made me suspect that the respect they felt for me was born of fear; and inquiries revealed this to be true.

The village [supposedly] had numerous troublesome ghosts, spirits, and deities. The villagers brought in a well-known exorcist to drive them away. He tied some rice grains—over which he had uttered a mantra—into a corner of the cloth he wore and sat on a cot; then he made four men carry the cot around all the dwelling places of the ghosts and spirits. The exorcist buva kept on chanting a mantra and throwing rice grains all about him. But when he came to the spot where I lived, he suddenly fell off the cot! Later, when the ritual with mantras was over, he explained that he could conquer all the spirits, but the deity that lived behind the Buddhist temple defeated him! So, a man who lived near the dwelling place of such a dreadful deity was clearly able to exercise control over these deities and lesser spirits; and if such a man was offended through theft or suchlike, he would at once unleash all the terrible deities upon the village! What wonder then if the village should develop all manner of disease? Frightened by this

thought, the villagers showed me great humility and thought it dangerous to offend me!

The Brahmin monk, the disciple of the monk Mahavir, was going blind. He had developed cataracts in both eyes and was about to lose his eyesight altogether. I took him to the Bengali doctor at Kasaya, who said the old man would have to be taken to Gorakhpur to have the cataracts removed. So the old monk, a young lad, and I went to Gorakhpur. Unfortunately, the doctor experienced in cataract removal had left and another civil surgeon had come in his place. I have already mentioned how dirty the hospitals in the United Provinces are. This hospital also was careless with patients. The people of this province are ignorant; food cooked by one is unacceptable to another. Even if a Brahmin cook is employed, people of his own caste may disapprove of his cooking. So people set up stoves everywhere in the hospital and dirty the place.

On the day of our arrival, one of the old monk's cataracts was removed. But the necessary advance precautions had not been taken. Being totally inexperienced in such matters, I could say nothing. The assistant surgeon complained [privately] about his superior, but had to keep quiet. I got to know him well and ate at his house in Gorakhpur.

Leaving behind the lad who was to look after the old monk, and requesting the assistant civil surgeon to take care of him, I went to see the ancient Buddhist sites, such as Shravasti. I did not want to carry money with me, so I kept postage stamps worth a rupee and a half instead, bought my train ticket through the lad, and went to Balarampur. I reached the place in the morning. A maharaja lives there, with an annual revenue of sixty to seventy lakh rupees. I wanted nothing from him, but went straight to his palace, expecting him to have made arrangements for travellers, as was usually done by other royalty in North India. The guards stopped me, of course; but nobody else took notice of me. Finally I met the son of the royal priest, who took me home and gave me food. After eating, I took the road to Shravasti. This place, ten miles from Balarampur, is now called 'Sahyat Mahyat'. I reached it at about 5 p.m. At present there is no human habitation there at all; the place is overgrown by the forest. The river Achiravati (now known as Rabti) flows by, and the natural beauty of the surrounding area is truly admirable. Here we can see the site of the *arama*

(vihara) of Anathapindika. At present there are only heaps of bricks and earth left by large broken structures. The Archaeological Survey has dug the sites of some dilapidated structures and collected numerous valuable stone inscriptions, Buddha images, etc. But they have been sent to the museum at Calcutta, because there is no museum here.

After seeing the place, I spent the night at a village on the way back. The next morning I had my meal at a Brahmin's house and gave some of my postage stamps to a man to buy me a ticket to Uskabazar. This station is close to the Nepali border, and from there the Buddha's birth-place is about twenty-six miles away. I reached the station the same morning. I was wearing Burmese sandals and they were a hindrance rather than a help on the journey. So I said to the station-master, 'I am keeping my sandals in your office; kindly let them remain here.' The station master, a Bengali gentleman, said, 'There is no objection to keeping your sandals here. But I am curious to know where you have come from and where you are going. I would be grateful if you stop here for a while. Just now I have to attend to urgent duties at the station, so I will meet you in about fifteen minutes.' He hastened inside and started on his work. I sat on a bench outside. Within half an hour he came out again and said, 'Now I am free. Tell me about yourself.' I told him of my plan in brief. He said, 'Some pilgrims from Burma came here, so I know that the Buddha's birth-place is quite far from here. It was all right for those pilgrims, because they had money and could travel in a rented bullock cart. But you will not be able to manage such a long journey on foot. An alternative arrangement is possible, which is why I asked you to wait. A new railway line has been laid from here to Sohratganj, but the passenger train has not yet started. Only goods trains go once in a while. There is a Kayastha railway store-keeper here who will know whether there is a goods train due today or tomorrow. If it is, take it to Sohratganj. A Kshatriya zamindar named Sohratsingh lives there; he is a very good man and ever ready to help travellers. If you mention my name, he will make the necessary arrangements for your journey in the Terai of Nepal.' (Terai is the region at the foot of the Himalayas which Nepal obtained from the British government [as mentioned earlier].)

I liked the station master's counsel. So he sent for the store-keeper and asked whether anything could be arranged for me. The

store-keeper, a very good man, agreed to convey me safely to Sohratganj; what is more, he arranged for me to have my meal at his house that day. Afterwards he took me to the goods train bound for Sohratganj. At about five in the evening, I reached Sohratganj station and immediately went to Sohratsinghbabu's house. Babu received me respectfully, in keeping with his custom; and showed me a couple of books on Buddhism that he had. They were gifted to him by Buddhist pilgrims. He also had a couple of books which provided general information about Buddhism. I did not want to eat at night; even so, he arranged for me to be at the house of a pandit under his patronage. Panditji knew some Sanskrit, but because I had studied at Kashi he did not enter into a verbal battle with me! Besides, I had been sent to him by his patron, so it was not prudent to offend me in any way. The following day, Panditji served me *pakki rasoi*. (Milk, puris, and vegetable dishes unmixed with flour are known as '*pakki rasoi*' in North India. Rice and any preparation made with rice grains make for '*kachchi rasoi*', which cannot be eaten by a holy man.) I would have eaten even *kachchi rasoi*, but the Brahmin pandit did not consider it appropriate. Be that as it may.

After my meal, I started for Kapilavastu. Sohratsinghbabu requested me to stay with him for a couple of days. But I told him that I had left the old monk at Gorakhpur and had to hasten back, so he did not insist. But knowing that I would find it very difficult in the Terai of Nepal, he sent with me an honest barber from a family under his patronage. Babu gave the barber groceries and one rupee for travel expenses. Kapilavastu is seven miles away, but it is a desolate place in the middle of a teak forest. Nearby is the village of Nigliva. A broken-down stone pillar erected by Ashoka to commemorate Konagaman Buddha lies near it. People call this pillar Nigali, which has given the village the name 'Nigliva'.

Two miles from Sohratganj is the Nepal border, and five miles further lies Nigliva. But this road in the Nepali Terai is too terrible for words. Part of it went over the dykes of little fields—which were filled with water at the time. After walking for a few minutes, one had to walk through water where the dyke had been washed away. On account of the difficult road, we reached Nigliva barely before sunset, although we had left Sohratganj quite early. Seeing my yellow robes, the people

there would not let the two of us even enter their homes. At last the barber said, 'Don't ask these people for anything at all. Let me go and inquire at the next house; just stand on the road until I return.'

There was no alternative but to listen to the barber's advice. He went to the nearby house of a rich farmer and told the people within that I had been sent by Sohratbabu and that he himself had been sent along to manage things for me. Sohratbabu had large lands in the Nepali Terai, so these people felt great respect for him. Once his name had been mentioned, people invited me in and gave me a respectful welcome. So I said, 'Gentlemen, a few minutes ago you were unwilling to even talk to me, and now you welcome me so respectfully!' One of them replied, 'Sir, your strange clothing frightened us. We were afraid that the Nepali government would penalize us for sheltering such a man! This regime is not like your British regime. Here we need to be wary of anything and everything. We cannot tell what we may or may not be penalized for! But Sohratbabu's name dispelled our fear. He has influence with the Nepali government as well, which has convinced us that we are in no danger for sheltering a person sent by him. This is why we are ready to receive you warmly.'

I do not know whether or not the Nepali officials harassed these people as they claimed. But I do not believe they would have been in trouble for sheltering a visitor. However, the chief fault of the Nepali government is the total absence of education among the people. The people of the Terai resemble those in places like Ayodhya, they are not like Nepalis: Indians have settled here. However, they are not as advanced as their kin in North India. As far as education is concerned, all of North India is backward, as mentioned earlier. But in North India visitors are welcomed very hospitably. These people in the Nepali Terai do not possess this virtue either. The barber who accompanied me told me several times that the people were cruel and unhelpful. Although he lived near the Nepali border—and possibly had relatives in this area—he was slightly afraid of them. Whatever the case, we found Sohratsingh's name very useful. Wherever we went, the barber would approach a rich farmer in advance and inform him that I had been sent by Sohratbabu, that we carried our groceries with us, but only needed a place to stay. Then, as a matter of course, our food and other arrangements would be made.

Lumbindevi lies fourteen miles to the east of Nigliva. We stayed overnight with a farmer and reached Lumbindevi the next morning. The village of Lumbindevi is settled two miles to the south of Lord Buddha's birthplace. We went to this spot first, and not the village. The Buddhist texts call this spot 'Lumbini-vana'. From a distance one sees nothing but the ruins of old structures and trees growing out of them. We went to see Ashoka's stone pillar, inscribed on which are words to this effect: 'Lord Buddha was born here; therefore I came in person to worship here, and erected this stone pillar.' A few years ago the Archaeological Survey dug it out of a mound. Its upper portion is broken off and only about a ten-foot lower portion remains standing. When I went down into the hollow and read the inscription, tears started streaming down my face. The poor barber stood looking at me in amazement! For a few minutes I just sat near the pillar. I was extremely happy to have a darshan of the spot—no matter if it was in such a wretched state. But that was not to last long.

From the heaps of earth and stones has been retrieved the image of Mayadevi, and a small temple built around it. I do not know whether it has been built by the Nepali government or someone else. A Tibetan lama settled in the kingdom of Nepal used to live here. The pictures he drew on the walls and the mantras he wrote could still be seen. The image of Mayadevi is badly damaged. But the scene of the Buddha's birth as described in the Buddhist holy books is clearly visible. Shown in the carved image is the scene of Brahamadev himself receiving the newborn infant. But the sad and astonishing thing is that the image is named Lumbindevi [Goddess Lumbini] by these people and animal sacrifices are made to her! The Nepali government also gets numerous animals killed! The area outside the temple was literally drenched in blood! The disgusting sight upset me terribly. Hundreds of creatures were sacrificed before the image of this mother—the mother who gave birth to the supreme Indian sage who eradicated the sorrow of the whole world and who harboured great compassion for all creatures! What ignorance, what thoughtlessness, what saddening behaviour! But I had no means of changing the state of affairs, and a feeling of deep unhappiness was not likely to produce any result. So I took another good look at the place, somehow consoled myself, and went into Lumbindevi village.

I do not recall where I had my meal in Lumbindevi village and how I journeyed on—because I repeatedly saw before me the scene outside Mayadevi's temple and was overcome by despair and dejection. In short, the barber and I walked from Bhagwanpur to Uskabazar. Nothing of the money or groceries with the barber was used up. I had deposited with the station master in advance postage stamps for the amount of my ticket to Gorakhpur, so I had no need at all for money. Therefore I gave the rupee and the groceries to the barber, and went on to Gorakhpur from the station.

Our old monk's eye was quite damaged, for which he severely blamed not only the doctor, but also me! But what was lost could not be regained. I brought him back to Kushinara, installed him in the dharmashala, and began making preparations for my journey to Burma.

In the course of that year I travelled to many places and met various people. But in the main, I was able to go on pilgrimage to the [holy] places of Kushinara, Buddhagaya, Rajagriha, Shravasti, Kapilavastu, and Lumbini-vana. This is why this chapter has been given the rubric 'Pilgrimage to Buddhist Holy Places'. Among all these holy places, Buddhists regard as extremely sacred the Buddha's birthplace Lumbindevi, the place of his enlightenment Buddhagaya, Sarnath where the Lord preached his first sermon, and Kushinara where he passed into Parinirvana. (*'Here the Tathagata was born . . . here the Tathagata attained perfect enlightenment . . . here the Tathagata set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma . . . here the Tathagata passed into the final Nirvana—these are the sites to be seen by the devout.'*—*Maha-parinibbana-sutta* [Pali])<sup>78</sup>

### 15. Burma Again

Chandramuni had written to Khejari and arranged in advance for the money required for [my] travel from Calcutta to Burma. Accompanying me was the Sinhalese lay follower from Buddhagaya, I think. He had come to Kushinara and wanted to go on to Burma as well. The monk Mahavir arranged for the fare from Tehsil Dauriya to Calcutta. This

<sup>78</sup> 'Tathagata' (Tathaagata) is an epithet applied to the Buddha by himself and others. Among its several meanings is 'one who has reached the ultimate stage'.

time I spent only a day or two at Calcutta. From there I went to Rangoon where I met Dnyana-trilok. He also wanted to go to Mandalay and spend a few days in the Sagaing hill. Accordingly we two went to Mandalay and then onward to stay in the vihara of U Rajendra on Sagaing hill. ('U' is a Burmese honorific; it is prefixed to the names of monks or eminent men.)

Here were small huts and four or five caves that had been dug. At least fifty viharas of this type were located in these mountains. Groceries for the monks were sent by the people of Mandalay and Sagaing town. Some sanyasi women there, who follow the Ten Items of Good Character,<sup>79</sup> take groceries from lay followers and give cooked food to the monks. In some places a lay follower prepares food and serves the monks, and eats alongside. The ashrams of these sanyasi women are located at quite a distance from the monks' ashrams; and neither monks nor male laity are allowed to go there except at specified times. It is said that one such ashram has 250 to 300 sanyasi women living in it. The chief of this ashram was a woman of a well-known family in Burma who had mastered the three *Pitakas*, especially *Abhidharma Pitaka*. She could recite from memory some chapters in this last text, which is why ordinary monks hesitated to talk to her about Buddhist philosophy.

One such ashram of sanyasi women was located on the river bank, quite far from our vihara. Dnyana-trilok and I went there for our food. Our meal would be finished by ten in the morning, and we had the rest of the day free for meditation, etc. There was a *sthavira* named Uttara in this region, who taught meditation. We started going to him to study the practice of meditation [with the help of] *karma-sthanas* [objects of meditation].<sup>80</sup> He could not understand our language, nor could he speak much Pali. Therefore we took along a young monk from a neighbouring vihara who knew Pali. The latter would translate into Pali what the teacher said in Burmese; then I would explain it to Dnyana-trilok in English.

<sup>79</sup> These were not Buddhist nuns, as explained by the author in the section on The Concept of Good Conduct in *The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha*. The Items of Good Character are also explained in the same section.

<sup>80</sup> These are also explained in *The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha*.



Initially, Acharya Uttara told us to keep before our eyes the word 'araham' [broadly, the perfect one] as written in the Brahmi script, and meditate upon it. Accordingly, we started our meditation in separate spots. Every third day we had to report our experiences to Acharya. Behind our vihara was a very tall hill on the crown of which was a small dilapidated cave. I sat there in meditation the whole day. From there one could see the vast current of the Irrawaddy below and the area surrounding it. At the time of sunset the scene was incredibly beautiful. Dnyana-trilok sat in a similar spot; but he could not concentrate. He could see clearly before his eyes the letter 'a'. But as soon as he reached 'ra', the letter would sprout tails which would then turn into snakes! This was a big obstacle to his meditation. I was able to meditate properly on this word. When we told Acharya our experiences, he showed us the next stage: while meditating on this word, we would behold some scenes within our closed eyes. We were to note them properly and convey them to him. I first saw two white lotuses and then the setting sun. Acharya said they were good scenes and I should continue to meditate upon them. But Dnyana-trilok's scenes did not remain steady, nor were they good. Sometimes he would see items of food, sometimes snakes. We were having a difficult time with food, and the general state of affairs had clouded his mind.

Let me narrate an incident to illustrate this. The cave in which we lived did not have a door; and even if it did, we could not have closed it at night because there was no ventilation except through the door. The cave had an inner section and an outer one. Both were so small that nothing other than two cots could be accommodated. The outer section was somewhat broader and I slept there on a cot; in the inner section, on a cot, slept Dnyana-trilok. The reason why he slept in the inner section was probably his fear of wild animals such as tigers. One night, before going to bed I said to him jokingly, 'Suppose the opening of this cave collapses and we are buried inside, what would our condition be? They would dig us out after two days, but until then we would have to suffocate in this dark cell! Your dwelling place is even more dangerous, it is deep inside the mountain!' My words had a strange effect on Dnyana-trilok's confused mind. He would not go in to sleep and said, 'I will stay on only if you give me your place, else I am out of this cave!' I vacated my place and gave it to him. We moved our cots and rearranged our living areas.

Thus Dnyana-trilok could not concentrate much on his meditation; so he left Sagaing and went back to Rangoon. But I decided to stay on. I first came to Sagaing from Kushinara in December 1904, Dnyana-trilok and I spent about three months there. Dnyana-trilok returned to Rangoon in about March 1905, after which getting meals became increasingly difficult for me. The sanyasi women who gave us meals gradually went off elsewhere: these women and some of the monks were there only over the winter, the area being comfortable and the winter cold, not severe. But as soon as summer starts, the rock heats up, causing problems. There is also a shortage of water. The monks in our vihara, except one or two, left in March and went elsewhere; and the ones who were left had to go to Sagaing town to beg for food. The town was almost three miles from our vihara. It was difficult to get enough food there for subsistence; besides, the exertion involved in walking to and fro was beyond me.

Near us was the vihara of the Venerable Pandava. It was possible for me to get a small hut there, and meals were not a problem because the *sthavira* had many lay disciples. Moreover, the *sthavira* and his disciples were vegetarian, and all the food was cooked in the vihara itself. I went to the *sthavira* and asked whether he would give me shelter. This *sthavira* was famed for his mastery over Pali, but he could not follow my Pali—nor did he like to admit that he could not! He said to me angrily in broken Pali, 'Your Pali pronunciation is very bad. You should pronounce the 'ch' sound not as in Sanskrit, but as in Burmese.' (For example, the Burmese pronounce the word 'sachcha' as 'tissa'.) I replied, 'Sir, the Sinhalese pronunciation is also like ours. Therefore one cannot claim that the Burmese pronunciation is the best. However, I see no point in arguing about pronunciation. Buddha-guru has counselled that one should keep one's eye on the objective and behave accordingly. Therefore, although you do not like my pronunciation, just grasp the gist of my words.' Now enraged, the Venerable Pandava said, 'It is no wonder your pronunciation matches that of the Sinhalese. This [wrong] pronunciation is entirely responsible for the Indian and the Sinhalese people falling away from Buddhism! Religions such as Islam and Christianity are spreading in India, and Indians are lost to Buddhism. And in Sinhala-dvipa, Christianity is widespread!'

Realizing that nothing was to be gained from arguing further with the *sthavira* over the pronunciation of Pali words, I took my leave. But

while leaving I did ask once again whether I could get a hut there to live in. The *sthavira* told me he would consider the matter and let me know the following day. The next day he sent word saying the hut was not available! That was that! My pronunciation of the 'ch' sound had caused the whole problem!

Now I thought I should try elsewhere, and went—through an acquaintance—to a vihara situated on top of a hill. A monk of medium age lived there, along with a couple of young *shramaners*. He agreed to give me a place to stay but said that meals would not be available! A mile away on the bank of the Irrawaddy lived some sanyasi women, and a village was situated a little distance up a mountain. I decided to stay here, if possible, and continue with my meditation. I pulled on somehow for more than a fortnight. But then I suddenly ran a high fever because of the exertion of climbing up and down the mountain and because of the oily Burmese food. The water in this vihara was also very dirty. Rain water was collected in a large tank and used until the following rainy season. As long as I had the strength to climb down, I would bring water from the Irrawaddy to drink. But once down with fever, I had no alternative but to drink the tank water. I boiled and strained it but still could not bring myself to drink it. After about five days of such hardship, I tired of the place; and as soon as I had recovered a little, took myself to Mandalay [literally, 'took my body and deposited it at Mandalay', which indicates a considerable degree of detachment].

In Mandalay I lived in the ashram of a *sthavira* named U Trilok. He could speak immaculate Pali, and fortunately his pronunciation was like ours. He was very famous for observing his sacred vows. If a monk got up late, he would say, 'In Mandalay city, little girls get up at dawn and prepare food for you; and you subsist on that food and sleep to your heart's content. You should be ashamed!' He had laid down a penalty for monks who got up late: they were to water the trees in the ashram and fill a certain number of vessels with water, to be placed before the Buddha image. One morning Acharya Trilok was engaged in these penalty tasks himself, so I asked him the reason. He answered, 'Because I got up late.' I said, 'But you have made this rule for your disciples; how can it apply to you?' Acharya said, 'O long-lived one, the laws we make are not meant to be broken. We can advance only as

long as we obey good laws. The law is above us all; we should believe this and conduct ourselves accordingly, with sincerity.'

Another day I saw Acharya Trilok wandering through the muddy streets of Mandalay, begging for food. I was astonished to see this sixty-year-old *sthavira* walking about in the rain and mud. After returning to the vihara I asked him, 'Guruji, how is it that you went to beg for food yourself today in the rain?' He said, 'O long-lived one, unless I go myself, we cannot get vegetables, curries, etc. in quantities sufficient for all the monks. Nobody knows the young monks in town, so nobody pays them any attention. They are sent away with only dry rice. This is why I go begging for food even in heavy rain and through muddy streets. How can I look on as young monks eat only dry rice, while I make a good meal?' My only reason for narrating this is to let readers know that Acharya Trilok was as compassionate as he was strict.

Acharya Trilok was very well pleased with me. As I was a guest, he did not expect me to follow the rule about getting up at dawn. Also, I was never allotted the task of sweeping the vihara. He had told some householders in the city to arrange for me to get Indian-style vegetable dishes, etc., every day. I would visit on an average about ten households, collect a little food at each, and return to the vihara. Mandalay city has ten thousand monks, and the people there are not very affluent; therefore many monks find it very difficult to get food. They manage to collect sufficient rice only after begging at a hundred houses. Obtaining curries and vegetables is a task beyond the new monks. Even so, I managed very well, despite being a foreigner and new there. The water in Mandalay was also potable. Thus, on the whole I liked this place better than Sagaing. But after a few days I realized that the Burmese food did not agree with me. For one thing, substances like milk and ghee were usually not available. For another, all vegetables were cooked in sesame oil; some dishes even contained uncooked oil. This gave me a lot of trouble. The weather in Mandalay is also extremely hot in May. Therefore I decided to go to Moulmein in May.

A society for the propagation of Buddhism had been established at Mandalay. Its functions were to provide help to monks, arrange lectures, publish books on Buddhism in the Burmese language, etc. This society bought my ticket up to Rangoon, and I travelled the remaining distance by boat. The cities of Mandalay and Moulmein were poles

apart in relation to viharas. The viharas in Mandalay—even the ones dating from the time of the Burmese kings—do not compare well with those at Moulmein. The merchants of Moulmein, being very wealthy, have constructed very large viharas, with gold leaf designs inside. But the number of monks here is not as large as it is in Mandalay—an enormous vihara would have only about five monks! The monks here also receive liberal alms. During the four rainy months, public gifts are distributed at many places—where the monks need to take along a porter each!

Here I stayed at the Venerable U Sagara's vihara named Vaijayant. This is an extremely large vihara, but I stayed in a small room near the stupa. On days that were dry I would go and sit on a nearby hill from where I could look upon a very delightful scene. But even in this vihara, my hardship with food continued. It was difficult to get a meal without meat and fish, so I had to subsist on boiled moong, rice, and tinned butter. Once in a while curds were available, and for a few days an Indian policeman sent me dal. Despite all these hardships, my days here passed off better than in Mandalay. After the four rainy months, a *sthavira* named Pradnya-swami invited me to stay in his vihara. I went there with permission from the Venerable Sagara. I would teach the Venerable Pradnya-swami the grammar *Mugdha-bodh*, and he would teach me *Abhidharmaartha-sangraha*. But here again the oily food affected my health. I tried the medicine of a Parsi doctor, but without success. I was quite tired of life. One day the doctor gave me a lotion to massage my feet with; the bottle was labelled 'poison'. That night the thought of drinking it to end my life entered my mind countless times! Finally, I threw the bottle out of the window and went to sleep.

In order to try a change of scene, I went to stay on an island named 'Bilu Chaun' which lay beyond Moulmein. There I lived in a small hut on a heavily forested hill. Other monks lived at a distance, and at night I was alone in my hut. Even here my health continued poor. Then I spent a fortnight at a place about six miles from Moulmein where some monks lived in lovely log huts in the forest. My hut was situated far from the others, and there were tigers in the forest. Wild animals gave me no trouble, but the meals involved terrible hardship. I had to walk more than two miles to beg for food, and even then I rarely got any-

thing other than rice. Meat and fish were available, but what use were they to me?

In sum, my experience was that it was well-nigh impossible to live in Burma as a monk. A monk is not allowed to cook for himself, and I could not subsist on the food I received from others. Given this situation, I thought I should spend my remaining days somewhere in India. But *sthaviras* like Pradnya-swami said there were no Buddhist monks in India, so it would be difficult for a solitary monk to live by the rules of *Vinaya*. Realizing that it was pointless to retain my monkhood any longer, I requested the *sthaviras* for permission to give it up. I would need to carry money, cook for myself at times, and eat after midday on occasion—so that I would not be able to abide by the rules applicable to monks. I therefore asked to be allowed to leave monkhood in the proper fashion. The Venerable Pradnya-swami consented, and started getting ochre clothes made for me. But ultimately he changed his mind and said, 'What you say is true. But we will be sorry to see you leave monkhood in our presence. Therefore you should go to Calcutta and perform the rite of leaving the Sangha there.' I had to agree to the *sthavira's* words, partly for lack of an alternative and partly out of my affection for him.

I had no trouble whatsoever on my journey from Burma to Calcutta. I obtained my steamer fare with ease and travelled Second Class from Rangoon.

During these two years, from January 1904 to January 1906, I suffered great physical hardships, as mentioned above. But mentally, I advanced a great deal. Having gradually formed the habit of concentrating the mind, I was able to grasp even difficult texts such as *Abhidharma* in a relatively short time. I read many Pali texts in my spare time, and the first two parts of *Vishuddhi-marga* twice or three times. In addition, I got to see many countries and meet many *sthaviras*—and thus gained wide experience of the world.

## 16. Transformation

The period since my departure from Goa to my arrival in Calcutta in January 1906 can be said to have been spent only in education. During this period my only objective was to acquire knowledge of Buddhism.

But now a new desire emerged—to make some effort to propagate knowledge of Buddhism. However, I could not clearly understand what path to follow in order to be of use in India. When I came to Calcutta I thought of going to Amravati for a while and then going on to Pune if possible, to try something there. But a sudden occurrence gave my transformation an unexpected turn. I want to describe in this chapter how it came about.

In Calcutta a vihara named 'Bauddha Dharmankur' had just been built in an extremely dirty locality in Kapaltala. The only reason to call this place a vihara was probably that a Buddha image had been installed in it! I thought the place was quite unworthy of that appellation. Be that as it may; I went to stay in it only because there was nowhere else. (The Mahabodhi Sabha had given up its rented premises and moved its belongings to Kashi; so it was impossible to get lodgings there.) I planned to rest for two days and then start on my travels. Two monks from Chittagong lived there, Kripacharan and Gunalankar by name. They knew a gentleman named Shri Harinath De quite well: he was trying to learn Pali and therefore came occasionally to the vihara. A Burmese monk named Purna lived in a rented house nearby. He also knew Harinath De well. This monk had met me in Ceylon, and heard all about me later when I was in Burma.

I had spent barely a day in Dharmankur Vihara when the monks Kripacharan and Gunalankar seemed eager for my departure. I told them I did not expect money or anything else from them, and that I wanted to stay only a day or two, to rest. I might have thought of extending my stay, but their eagerness made me decide to leave immediately. That is to say, I wanted to spend Monday there and leave on Tuesday by train for Nagpur. But by a coincidence, the monk Purna came to hear of my plan on Monday. That was probably the day he and I met in Calcutta for the first time. He at once went and told Harinath De, 'If you want to learn Pali, there is a man here such as you would not find in Ceylon or Burma. But he plans to leave tomorrow.'

Harinath De was busy with his brother's wedding that day, having to perform the duties of a host. He received this message while he was engaged in the function. As soon as he had a little free time, he came to me and said, 'Stay here for at least another day or two, so that I can

tell you in detail what I want. Right now I am busy with my brother's wedding. I have turned up here because I heard you are to leave tomorrow. I request you to stay on at least until tomorrow and listen to what I have to say.'

Shri Harinath De told me many other things as well: that he was a member of the Senate and a professor of English, that he had a desire to propagate Pali, etc.—none of which had much effect on me because I believed, at the time, that Bengali babus talk a lot and do very little; so it seemed rather unlikely that they felt any great interest in Buddhism! However, this highly qualified gentleman had requested me to stay on for at least one more day, so I decided to postpone my departure and spent Tuesday at Dharmankur Vihara.

It would not be inappropriate at this juncture to give a little information about Shri Harinath De—for the convenience of readers, although I myself obtained it later. Harinath was the oldest child of a Bengali Kayastha gentleman named Bhootnath De who passed the BL examination by his own effort and practised law at Raipur in the Central Provinces. This boy was rather slow in childhood; as a result his father paid no attention to his education at all. But he had a great interest in learning. He acquired the Bengali alphabet from his mother and started reading Bengali books. His mother knew a little Hindi as well, which he also learned. Then he began to learn English from a missionary. When he was eight his father thought of sending him to school—but discovered that he had progressed very far for his age in all three languages. So his father appointed tutors at home and also taught him himself, thus increasing Harinath De's knowledge considerably. By the age of twelve Harinath had made great advances in English, and a year or two later he passed the Matriculation Examination of Calcutta University and won a scholarship. Later Bhootnath De enrolled him in St Xavier's College. Harinath did extremely well in the language papers in all the university examinations.

After his MA he won an Indian government scholarship and went to England. At first he tried to pass the civil services examination, but failed because he was a little weak in mathematics and law, and perhaps because he had started drinking. Without losing heart, he tried to get the BA degree of Cambridge University. At Calcutta University he had

opted for Latin and passed. Here he stood first in Greek, Latin, and English. In addition, he acquired a good knowledge of French, German, and Arabic. It did not take him long to learn a language. Someone told me that he had committed to memory the entire Arabic dictionary! In English he wrote excellent prose as well as poetry.

After passing the BA at Cambridge, he got a job in the Indian Educational Service, and initially he was appointed professor of English at Dacca University. About a year later his father passed away. Before I arrived in Calcutta, Harinath De had been transferred to Presidency College and lived in a rented house in Dharamtala Street.

As decided, he met me again the following day and insisted that I stay in Calcutta for at least three months. He said, 'I have an intense desire to pass the MA in Pali. I have read most of the texts required for the examination, but cannot at all understand *Attha-salini*.<sup>81</sup> I have asked many monks, written to many scholars in Germany and elsewhere, but no one is able to help. Please explain this text to me over two months, and then go wherever you want. I am willing to pay you whatever you ask.'

I said, 'I would like to help you, but it will not be possible if I have to stay in this vihara. I am accustomed to living in solitude, but this place is crowded day and night. Therefore, I can stay for two months if you arrange quiet lodgings for me.'

Harinath De agreed at once. His father-in-law's house was located adjacent to his own and had two rooms in the compound entirely separate from the main house. He showed me these rooms. In case I did not like them, he was prepared to rent an independent house for me. But I approved of them, not wishing to put him to unnecessary expense, and moved in at once. I had my meals at Harinath De's house, as it was close by. I lived there until 15<sup>th</sup> March 1906. During this time, I explained *Attha-salini* to Harinath De in detail. I pointed out hundreds of mistakes in the edition published by the Pali Text Society. He was greatly pleased with all this and started to press me to stay on in Calcutta.

<sup>81</sup> This is a commentary on the first book of *Abhidhamma Pitaka* and a difficult text to understand. It has been attributed to Buddhaghosha, though Dharmanand contests this in his preface to *Visuddhimagga* (Harvard Oriental Series), p. xiv.

During this time I formed a friendship with another gentleman at Harinath De's house. This was Shri Manmohan Ghosh, professor of English at Presidency College. He was the son of the renowned Bengali reformer Rajnarayan Basu's daughter; his father was in the Indian Medical Service. His older brother was secretary to the Maharaja of Coochbehar, and his younger brother Shri Aurobindo Ghosh was a high official in Baroda State and later became Principal of National College at Calcutta. His youngest brother Barindra Ghosh was arrested in connection with the Maniktala Bomb Conspiracy and sent to life imprisonment across the Black Water [i.e. to Andaman].<sup>82</sup> Such was Manmohan Ghosh's mastery over the English language that his poetry had been highly praised even in England. In 1906 this gentleman was visited by a terrible calamity—his wife had lost her sanity and was on her deathbed. The poor man, with his poetic bent of mind, found the situation unbearable. This was the time when we became friends. I gave him some books on Buddhism to read; he liked them a great deal and began discussing Buddhism with me.

I decided to leave Calcutta after 15<sup>th</sup> March and go to Sikkim. My purpose was to obtain information about Buddhism in the north, as I had already done in the south. Harinath De provided all help. In December 1905 Tashi Lama had come to Calcutta and been felicitated by the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha. Harinath De had been in the forefront of all this, and became very well acquainted with Captain O'Connor, Mr White, the Resident at Sikkim, and others. He gave me two letters of introduction on behalf of the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha—to the Prince of Sikkim and to Mr White himself. Manmohan Ghosh had already written to the headmaster of the Government High School at Darjeeling and arranged for me to stay with him. Harinath De himself paid for my clothes.

<sup>82</sup> Aurobindo Ghosh was a renowned scholar educated in India and England and a militant nationalist. He was imprisoned for his role in the Alipore Bomb Case (1908–9) and later turned to religion and settled down in Pondicherry where he built an ashram. His younger brother Barindra Kumar was a revolutionary who belonged to the Maniktala Group, and received a death sentence in connection with the Alipore Bomb Case. It was reduced to life imprisonment and he was deported to the Cellular Jail in Andaman. After being released in 1920 he turned to journalism.

I left Calcutta about the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. I would need to carry money and eat at any time [on the journey]; therefore I gave up my monkhood through the appropriate rites before leaving. The journey up to Darjeeling was by train, so that I had no trouble whatsoever. But I had to go on foot from Darjeeling to Sikkim. The region being totally unfamiliar, I did not think it desirable to undertake the journey relying solely on porters. Therefore the headmaster gave me his gardener, who accompanied me up to Sikkim. Two Bhotia porters were engaged to carry my luggage, consisting of clothes, books, etc.; and the four of us—I, the headmaster's gardener, and the two porters—took the road to Sikkim. The gardener was very useful on the way as a cook.

A year earlier Younghusband's mission had gone to Tibet, and a road of sorts had been built via Sikkim for this event. So we did not have much trouble on the way. But at one point a Tibetan had been murdered and his body found lying by the roadside. We reached the spot at about sunset. There were some Tibetans' huts around, but I thought it dangerous to stay there and went straight to the government dak bungalow. The watchman there would not let me in, saying, 'You can sleep on the veranda tonight if you want, but I cannot allow you to stay inside without permission from the Sikkim government.' I said, 'I am going to stay with the Prince of Sikkim. If I can stay at his palace, why can't I stay in a mere dak bungalow?' The poor watchman became nervous at the mention of the prince's name, and immediately opened the door and allowed us to take our luggage inside! I let the two Bhotia porters sleep outside, and the gardener inside the room. I slept soundly, exhausted as I was. Nothing more occurred on the way that is worth recording.

After reaching Sikkim, I went straight to the prince's bungalow and gave him the letter of introduction from the Baudha Dharmankur Sabha. After reading it, he made arrangements for me to stay in a part of his own bungalow. My meals were cooked by one of his servants under my supervision. A new Anglo-Vernacular School had been opened there; the headmaster was a Bhotia gentleman named Dao Sandap Kaji. I tried to learn Tibetan from him. But he did not have much time, and I no longer had my former capacity for perseverance and hard work. As a result I did not progress beyond the Tibetan alphabet. Besides, I found staying there irksome. When I went to see

Mr White, the Resident, with Harinath De's letter, he had said, 'You will soon tire of the situation here. The Buddhism here is not as vigorous as in Ceylon. On the contrary, I doubt if these people can be called Buddhists at all.' I too experienced the truth of this soon. The *math* in Sikkim had had the custom—though recently abolished—of killing cows to feed the monks. However, the lama here thought nothing of killing animals such as pigs and eating them. Besides, the people's way of living was so dirty that I was reluctant to eat the food they cooked.

A lama had come all the way from Tibet to stay in a *math* built by the king of Sikkim. He had the reputation of being very learned. He could also speak Hindustani. His disciple had mastered Hindustani quite well. One day the disciple invited me to a meal on his guru's behalf. I said, 'I do not eat meat or fish, so don't press me.' He said, 'No matter. We will take the necessary precautions.' So I accepted the invitation and went to lunch at his *math*. Seats had been placed and two metal plates served for his guru and myself. Near the plates were two porcelain bowls containing something that looked like meat. I said, 'Lama-saheb, this looks like meat!' Thereupon, with an astonished countenance the lama stuck out his tongue (as Tibetans do when apologizing or registering surprise) and said, 'You had sent word with my disciple that you do not eat meat or fish. Why then would I prepare such a dish? This vegetable dish has been prepared for you with great effort.' I asked, 'Lamaji, what is it made of?' The lama said, 'It is made only of frogs. You need not be suspicious. The frogs here are not dirty like the large ones in India! I arranged for these frogs to be specially caught in the forest for you!' I was astounded and perplexed! The poor lama too was astonished and abashed! He could not grasp that a dish prepared with such effort should not meet with his guest's approval! Be that as it may. Finally, for his sake I ate a little rice and milk—like taking a medicine. The lama polished off the frog dish—expressing his regret once in a while that I could not enjoy it! After a couple of days the queen invited me to a meal. I had to explain then that I did not eat meat, fish, or frog—or indeed the meat of any creature at all! Who knows, I might be served a dish made of rats next!

After I left for Sikkim, Harinath De went to England in April with the maharaja of Burdwan. On the way he wrote to me from Aden to come again to Calcutta. That did not have much effect on me. But Shri

Manmohan Ghosh also wrote to say that staying in Sikkim would not allow me to serve the country, whereas by coming to Calcutta I could give a good direction to the new [social] awakening through my knowledge of Buddhism. This letter greatly affected me. I decided I had spent enough time in forests and Buddhist viharas; now I should render any service I could to my country.

But serving the country is not an easy matter, and there is no sense in pretending to achieve public welfare. I was not a university graduate, nor did I enjoy the support of an institution of long standing. So I could not see what public welfare I might achieve. Never mind public welfare—I was doubtful of achieving any sort of welfare of my own! In Calcutta, earlier, I had met eminent persons—such as Dr P.K. Roy—and conveyed to them my idea of starting a Pali class there. At the time I needed nothing more than food and lodging; monk's robes could have been obtained from Burma. But I had received no sympathy even for this simple proposal; rather, they seemed to feel a sort of contempt for Buddhism. Harinath De would have helped me, but he had no faith in any religion and he would have used me out of self-interest—as I had realized well after a two-month acquaintance. Now that I had left monkhood, nothing prevented me from accepting remuneration. Therefore I decided to win the sympathy of some Bengalis, follow the well-trodden path of employment, and make efforts to propagate Pali.

Now, if I was to take up employment, why not help my family? With this thought, I wrote a couple of letters to Goa to find out the state of my family. In my first letter to Shri Vishnu Naik I also asked him about the debt—I mentioned in an earlier chapter that my father had borrowed Rs 1,400 from him and signed a deed to that effect. He replied that not only had the debt not been paid off, but the interest had accumulated over the years; however, my family were very happy at my letter, etc. I had not written home at all after leaving Madras [four years earlier], so the general belief was that I was dead. This letter proved otherwise, so naturally everyone was happy.

In July 1906 Harinath De returned from England and wrote me another letter, warmly insisting that I come back to Calcutta. After a great deal of hesitation I decided to take a leap into public life, and came to Calcutta at the end of July. Immediately, I started to read

*Theragatha*, a text prescribed for the MA course, with Harinath De. But now I had no need to depend entirely on him. At this time, Sir Gooroodas Banerjee, Dr Rashbihari Ghosh, and others had planned to set up National College at Calcutta, and it was to open on 15<sup>th</sup> August. I made great efforts to introduce Pali into the college curriculum, and Shri Manmohan was of great assistance in this. He arranged for me to meet Shri Satyendranath Tagore, who included Pali in the college curriculum even at such short notice.<sup>83</sup> However, the salary fixed for me was rather meagre, only Rs 30. Whatever the salary, I was happy at the opportunity to show results. From the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, that is, from the time National College opened, I started working there as a teacher of Pali.

But De did not like this at all. Perhaps he was upset because I had joined the new institution without his knowledge and advice. He said, 'National College is an institution opposed to the British government, and I am a government servant. How can we get along? If you wanted a job, I could have got you a very much better one. But now that you are associated with this institution, I will not be able to do anything for you in future.' I said, 'My main objective is not getting a job. I have accepted the job with the intention of achieving something by joining the flow of public life and also helping my family if possible, by following the straight path. The Managing Committee of the College includes persons like Sir Gooroodas Banerjee and Dr Rashbihari Ghosh who are in the good books of the government. This being so, there is no reason for the government to suspect me. Besides, no matter how politically extremist this institution may be, it is not likely that extremism can be taught through Pali. Even so, if my friendship is likely to impede your advancement, I shall leave your house right now and find other lodgings. I have eaten your food for a while, and as a Maharashtrian I feel it shameful to do anything that would be detrimental to you.'

<sup>83</sup> Satyendranath Tagore (an older brother of Rabindranath Tagore) was the first Indian to join the Indian Civil Service. He was posted to the Bombay Presidency circa 1864 and worked there for about thirty years. He was in close contact with the leading reformers of Maharashtra, including prominent Prarthana Samaj members. See the Wikipedia entry on him.

Things came to a head. Harinath was in a quandary and said, 'Don't leave my place just yet. Let me first inquire with my friends; I will let you know if the government is likely to be displeased.' I did not take his words seriously. He should have known very well that the government would not be displeased. I stayed on at his house that day, as he had suggested. The following day he said to me, 'I am sorry that my behaviour yesterday was likely to hurt you. I have found out upon inquiry that your association with National College is not likely to trouble me in any way. Feel free to stay with me and carry on your work there.' What is more, from that day De would drop me at National College in his carriage on his way to Presidency College.

In National College I got only five or six students, but they were mostly hard-working. Two of them returned in 1915 with degrees from Harvard University. As for the money, there was not much gain. Had I been compelled to set up a separate household, I doubt if Rs 30 would have been sufficient even for me by myself.

Initially Shri Aurobindo Ghosh was the college principal. But soon he was involved in the 'Vande Mataram' case and resigned his post, which devolved upon Shri Satishchandra Mukherjee. This gentleman was very suspicious of me, and I had heard that he had opposed my appointment quite strongly. When he became principal, he gave me a strict order not to teach anything related to Buddhism in my class! So I said, 'If that is the case, the sooner you close down the Pali class the better—because a Pali text that is not related to Buddhism would be hard to find!' Then he said, 'It is all right to teach whatever is in the texts. But do not preach to the students to become Buddhists.' I said, 'I have not joined the college as a Buddhist missionary. If I wish to preach, I will find another venue for the purpose. But I will explain properly whatever is contained in the texts. If you oppose that, I will tender my resignation right away.' After this, Principal Mukherjee and I had absolutely no occasion for disagreement. The college students formed a very favourable opinion of me, so Mukherjee also had to change his; and in the end he started insisting that I deliver some lectures to the students about Buddhism!

In October 1906 I decided to go to Goa. A gentleman named Palit accompanied me up to Mumbai. But there he fell ill and returned to Calcutta, cancelling his plans to visit Goa. On the way we stayed with

Shri Madhavrao Padhye [at Nagpur] for two days and then went to Amravati to visit Shri Govindrao Kane. On that occasion Shri Kane said to me, 'Dr Bhandarkar really wants to meet you.' I said, 'That sounds improbable because he was very annoyed with me.' Govindrao said, 'That is true. After you visited me here in 1904, I met him at Lonavla. Your name came up in the course of the conversation. Doctor-saheb said, "That young man seems quite insane! Why do you talk about him?" Then I told him all about you. As soon as he heard that you had studied Pali well, he became very eager to see you. And he has told me to convey to you that you should make a point of meeting him if you go there [to Pune] again.'

It was not as if I was unwilling to meet Dr Bhandarkar. Even if he was displeased with me, I would certainly have met him had I visited Pune. But on this trip it was not possible for me to go out of my way to Pune. So I said, 'I need to go straight to Goa from Mumbai, so I will not have the time to meet him.' But Kane knew that the annual celebration of the Prarthana Samaj was going on then. He sent a telegram to Dr Bhandarkar at the Prarthana Samaj address, assuming him to be there. This time I did not bother to deliver a lecture at Amravati and went directly to Mumbai. Shri (now Dr) Devdattarao Bhandarkar had come to the station to meet me, but we missed each other. My friend Palit and I stayed at Sukhaniwas near the Portuguese Church in Girgaum, and after an early meal I went alone to Professor Shridharpant Bhandarkar's house. Doctor-saheb was in his bath at the time. He finished in about ten minutes and came out wearing a bathrobe, and a conversation started at once. At the Prarthana Samaj that day, four lectures on the lives of various saints were to be delivered by different speakers. Doctor-saheb asked me to narrate the life of the Buddha on this occasion. For many years I had had no practice of speaking in Marathi; even so, I agreed at his insistence to say a few words on the life of the Buddha. At the time of the lecture in the evening, Doctor-saheb introduced me by narrating my past history—how, during my visit to Pune, he considered me to be only a young aspirant, and how he never imagined that I possessed the courage to work with such perseverance, etc. I cannot tell how my lecture went. But because of Doctor-saheb's introduction, the people of Mumbai—especially the Prarthana Samaj members—came to know me well. Since then,



during my visits to Mumbai from Calcutta, I would stay at the Ram-mohan Ashram of the Samaj.

After two days in Mumbai I took a boat to Panaji and then a rowboat to Murgaon. The following morning I went to Madgaon instead of going straight to Sankhwal. My old relative Bhiku Naik treated me extremely well on this occasion. Shri Vishnu Naik also treated me with affection. He and I rented a carriage and went to Sankhwal. News of my arrival had carried. At the sight of my Bengali clothes, everybody started crying! Shri Vishnu Naik had to console them.

It was not possible for me to stay home very long. I had to return to Calcutta before the Durga Puja holidays in October were over. So I spent a couple of days at home and came to Madgaon. My wife got ready to go to Calcutta with me, but my daughter was so frightened of my beard that she refused to go with us. After sending her to her maternal grandmother at Chikhali, my wife and I went to Calcutta.

Harinath De had been informed of my arrival in advance by telegram. He arranged for us to stay in his house and had a separate space cleared out for [our] cooking. The salary of Rs 30 per month was rather meagre, but we just about managed, having been spared the expense of rent, charcoal, etc. But in December my wife fell ill and had to be taken back to Goa.<sup>84</sup> Harinath De personally bore the expense for this trip.

At the end of 1906 the MA results were declared and Harinath De passed the Pali papers in the first class. Then he entered the University Syndicate with the help of Justice [Asutosh] Mookerjee. Some teachers were to be appointed in accordance with the new University Act. Harinath De made efforts to get me appointed as a reader in Pali, and succeeded because of his influence at the university. Most of the teachers were honorary, but it was resolved that Rs 100 per month should be paid to me and Satyavrat Samashrami. I joined the post in July 1907. But I had met Justice Asutosh Mookerjee and told him that even after I began work at the university, I would not sever my connection with National College. He did not object. He said, 'As long as you

<sup>84</sup> The illness was probably related to the early stages of Balabai's pregnancy; her son Damodar was born on 31 July 1907. This event, and the birth of their third child Manorama in 1910, finds no mention in this autobiographical narrative.

finish the university work in time, the Syndicate has no reason to inquire into how much time you spend doing other work.' As soon as I got this job, I started working at National College without pay, and continued working there as long as I was in Calcutta.

The job at Calcutta University resulted in great monetary gain for me. The salary and additional work as an examiner brought me between Rs 600 and Rs 900. But I was not able to do as much good as I would have liked. As a reader I had to teach only three hours a week. Besides, the two or three students in the class showed no great desire to master Pali. They were more concerned with scraping through to get a degree and get a salary increase or a new job. On the whole, staying in Calcutta brought me fame, but no real advantage. Here one must keep in mind that I used to think—and do still think—that my life's work is to sow in India the knowledge of Pali that I gained with such difficulty. That is why, although I was likely to benefit a great deal in Calcutta in other ways, I found it a very minor benefit.

I had accepted this job in order to be free—at least in part—of the debt incurred by my father, but had no success at all repaying it. Whatever money I earned was spent repaying the interest. Later, in August 1907, a lawsuit was filed regarding my father's land. Forty years earlier, a Sonar [i.e. goldsmith] and my father had a land dispute; but it had not erupted again during these forty years, at least to my knowledge. In 1907 Shri Ram Naik Banavalikar bought the Sonar's rights from his heirs and filed a lawsuit. In December 1907 I attended the Surat Congress and rushed off to Goa to settle the case through a compromise. But unfortunately Ram Naik had already filed a criminal case against my older brother and obtained possession of the land from the government. Against the wishes of my relatives and friends I went to his house and requested his older brother to settle the case out of court. But that had no effect. On the contrary, Ram Naik started quoting a highly inflated price for the land. Therefore we were forced to prove in court that we were in the right. Most of the zamindars in the village testified in our favour. The witnesses for the other party were four or five farmhands. Then the District Judge and the High Court ruled in our favour. (These two rulings were made while I was in America.) The criminal case against my older brother was also dismissed by the court. All this was good and proper, but I had to spend most of the money earned in

Calcutta on this affair. Almost Rs 1,000 were sunk in the court case. Therefore I began to seriously doubt whether I would be able to repay my father's debt. No sooner had I accepted a job at the university than a man—who had been friendly to me in my childhood—filed a lawsuit against us, collected a few false witnesses, and fought against us in court—all without forethought! This depressed me terribly. The situation in Goa has turned so strange that the Hindus there no longer understand what is good for them and what is not. Under these circumstances even if I repaid my father's debt and freed the land, who knew what might be its condition and how many lawsuits we would need to face! This dispirited me greatly.

There is no doubt that Harinath De felt a great deal of affection for me. When I stayed with him in 1906, he gave up drink only out of regard for me. His mother would thank me frequently in the belief that my coming there had brought about this change. An astrologer had told her that the study of Buddhism would reform her son, and she had faith in it. But in 1907 Harinath De was transferred to Hughli College as the principal, and his addiction surfaced again. Later, while he still held this post, he was made Librarian of the Imperial Library and his salary increased to Rs 1,100 per month.<sup>85</sup> He would claim that I was partly responsible for his getting the post. His mastery over Pali had earned him the favour of Calcutta's Lord Bishop Copleston. Bishop Copleston was an admirer of Pali and would consult Harinath De if he had any difficulty. His intervention had earned Shri De such a high position. I was very happy to see De prosper, but at the same time I felt sad to hear from others that his addiction was again manifest. When he returned from Hughli, I was no longer in his house. Dharmapal had rented the original premises of the Mahabodhi Sabha again. I stayed there for a few days; later I stayed for a while in the house of Shri Ambika Charan Sen in Ballygunge. While I was there I went to meet Harinath De at the Calcutta Club. De had rented an enormous room at the club at Rs 90 per month. He claimed he was blocking the room for Dr Pischel who was to arrive from Germany in a couple of months. When I met him a couple of Bengali pandits and two of his drinking

<sup>85</sup> Harinath De was the second Librarian of the Imperial (now National) Library, and the first Indian to hold this post.

companions were in his company. Harinath De flaunted his addiction before us that day. Not that he drank to excess; but earlier he would drink in secret, that day he drank openly. This made a deep impression on me. I came to the firm belief that the sooner I left Calcutta the better.

I had made many acquaintances in Calcutta. I had even heard that some people in the faction opposed to Harinath De liked me; but I never had any contact with them, openly or clandestinely. Some of them were good and liberal-minded. But I never made even a passing acquaintance with them, only because I knew Harinath De would feel hurt. Had I joined their faction, I would perhaps have benefited. But having contempt for such a bat-like mentality, the idea never occurred to me. Now it was beyond my control to reform Harinath De and put him on the right path. Therefore I had only one avenue open—to leave Calcutta. In sum, the objective with which I had taken a job there was not fulfilled, I did not seem to achieve much by way of the welfare of Bengali students, and the friend who had helped me so much was mired [in alcoholism] but I had no means to save him. All these things troubled me a great deal, and I developed an intense desire to turn towards my duty to the best of my ability. How this effort succeeded unexpectedly will be narrated in the next chapter.

### 17. Patronage of Shrimant Gaikwad Maharaj

Many years earlier I had heard the reputation of Shrimant Sayajirao Gaikwad, Maharaja of Baroda, as being foremost among the rulers who valued learning. In December 1906 he arrived in Calcutta as president of the Industrial Conference. Naturally, I felt a strong desire to meet him. I had known Shri Satyendranath Tagore, ICS, quite well ever since the establishment of National College. Besides, he respected Maharashtrians in general. Therefore I went to him and asked if he would introduce me to the Maharaja of Baroda. He said, 'It would be better to perform this introduction through his Diwan Shri Romesh Chunder Dutt whom I know very well.' That same day or the next, he took me personally to the house of Romesh Chunder Dutt. But Romeshbabu sent us away with vague statements to the effect that nothing was to be gained from my meeting Maharaj, that Buddhism was of no use to Baroda, and that Maharaj did not take much interest

in it. When we left, I had no hope that I would meet Maharaj. But Tagore said to me, 'Don't feel disheartened. I know Gaikwad Maharaj personally, and if you come to me at about seven tomorrow morning, we will both go and see him.'

At his suggestion I went the following morning to his house at 19 Store Road, Ballygunge. He started out in his usual dress. I offered to get a carriage for him (his own carriage not being available that day, for some reason), but he absolutely refused. He accompanied me on foot, saying he was accustomed to walking a mile or more every morning and was restive without the exercise. That morning Gaikwad Maharaj was out; naturally we could not meet him. But Tagore gave Shrimant's Private Secretary Shri (now Sir) Manubhai Mehta a message regarding me, and walked home.

Even these efforts would not have resulted in my meeting Shrimant Sayajirao. But a couple of gentlemen under his patronage kept on reminding Shri Manubhai and brought about our meeting on the second or third day. Maharaj did not have more than about fifteen minutes to spare. So, before I took my leave, he said, 'Do come to Baroda. I have a great many things to discuss with you. Here I have too much to do and do not have even five more minutes to talk.'

Although he had asked me to go to Baroda, I could not leave Calcutta for another three weeks or more. Later I took leave from National College for a few days and went to Goa to convey my wife there. From there I went to Baroda. I had come to know Shri Raoji Raghunath Shirgaonkar quite well in Calcutta. At this time (in 1907) he was Assistant Private Administrative Officer. I knew nobody else in Baroda, so I stayed with him. I was compelled to spend a long time there. At first Maharaj was away on a hunt; then he lost his aunt [his paternal uncle's wife] so I could not see him for another week. But on hearing that I had been awaiting him so long, he called me to his palace on the third day after his aunt's demise. After a long conversation he said, 'Because of my aunt's passing away, I cannot organize your public lecture in the palace. But if you come to these parts again, do not leave without meeting me.' He arranged for me to be paid Rs 160 for travel expenses and gave me leave.

After reaching Calcutta I maintained no correspondence whatever with Baroda State. But after almost a year a letter came from a state

official saying Maharaj Sarkar thought of me occasionally and wished to meet me in Baroda if I happened to be in the vicinity. I could not miss my work at the college and go there. So I replied saying it was not possible for me to come and meet Maharaj-saheb just then, but perhaps during the summer vacation; and also that I would inquire in advance where Maharaj was. During the summer vacation I went to Goa and spent most of the summer there. Then in July I went to Baroda and met Maharaj. On this occasion he asked me to deliver a lecture and it was arranged in the court house. Maharaj himself was to be present, but was unable to, at the last minute. That my lecture was effective became apparent from the speeches of a couple of gentlemen at the end. Later I met Maharaj at the palace. He asked me whether I wished to leave Calcutta and work in Baroda. I replied, 'I have no desire any longer to earn money and become rich. I would like to get work of my preference and enough money for subsistence.' He said, 'If you come and stay here, I am prepared to help in every way.' I said, 'Maharaj should not make it a condition that I live in Baroda. No matter where I live, I shall not forsake my duty to propagate knowledge of Buddhism among my fellow Maharashtrians. Therefore I should be permitted to stay in a place like Pune or Mumbai to do my work, and Baroda State should help me to the extent of covering my subsistence.'

Maharaj did not say anything definite at the time and left for Pune the same day or the next. I too went to Calcutta. After two or three weeks an urgent telegram came from Pune, from the Private Secretary of Maharaj. This was the gist: 'If you stay in any city in Maharashtra, you will receive Rs 50 every month from Baroda State, which will continue for three years. But you should write at least one book for Baroda State every year.' This telegram went first to Goa and then to other places, so it reached me late. At this juncture the secretary sent another telegram saying I should reply immediately to the first one. After informing Harinath De and Justice Mookerjee of my intentions, I sent a telegram accepting the stipend offered by Maharaj Sarkar and thanking him. But I also wrote a letter to say that I would go to Pune only in October. His secretary replied that there was no objection to my staying in Calcutta a month.

In Calcutta I had made the acquaintance of a Burmese gentleman, the Hon'ble Mong Ba Tu. He had especially invited me to Burma and

promised to give me all the portions of the *Tripitaka* that had been published, if I went. In September I went to Burma to meet him. Calcutta University had also given me a sum of Rs 300 to 400 to buy all the books that had been published in Pali. During this visit I went to meet our *sthaviras* at Moulmein. They received me with great respect, although I was no longer a member of the Sangha. Mong Ba Tu gifted me books worth about Rs 250. I still find these books very useful. Rather, I would have run into frequent difficulties without them and been greatly hampered in the task of teaching Pali.

At the end of September I returned from Burma to Calcutta. A strange thing had happened there during my absence. The university increased my salary from Rs 100 to Rs 250 per month and asked me for a three-year bond. Realizing that all this had happened because of the intervention of Harinath De and Justice Mookerjee, I said to Shri De, 'I accepted the stipend from Baroda after consulting you. How can you now ask me to break my promise?' Finally, after much discussion, Shri Harinath took me to Justice Mookerjee. I asked him the same question. He said, 'At the time we did not prevent you from going. But now we realize that if you stay on in Calcutta, Pali will be widely disseminated. That is why we want you to stay here. Now if you are worried about breaking your promise to Gaikwad Maharaj, I will request him, as Vice Chancellor of the university, to allow you to remain here for another three years. I will send him a telegram to that effect right away, if you wish. But you should not break your promise to us and leave.' I did not give a definite answer to Justice Mookerjee that day, but promised to think about it and returned home.

I have no words to describe how strange my state of mind was. On one side was the lure of Rs 250 per month, on the other the fear of abandoning my duty—my mind kept oscillating between the two. But ultimately I resolved not to abandon my duty, and felt very happy. The very next day I packed all my books in a case and sent it to Mumbai through Shri Anandrao Madgaonkar. And I said to his father Shri Dinanathrao Madgaonkar,<sup>86</sup> 'I am very happy indeed today for

<sup>86</sup> Dinanath Vishnu Madgaonkar was a well-known reformer in Mumbai, and one of the earliest members of the Prarthana Samaj. His son, Govind D. Madgaonkar, later became a judge in the Bombay High Court.

having overcome the lure of gain—through the compassion of the Buddha and Bodhisattva!'

But I had to say something to Harinath De. So I met him and said, 'I do not think it proper to send Shrimant Gaikwad Maharaj a message from here. Let me meet him and then let you know what happens. Until then I cannot give the Syndicate a definite reply.' Harinath De gave me a letter for Shrimant Gaikwad Maharaj, saying that my staying on in Calcutta would be very beneficial, etc.

After taking my leave of Justice Mookerjee and Harinath De, I came to Mumbai in October 1908 and, as I had already decided, sent my resignation to the Registrar of Calcutta University. I also wrote to De and Justice Mookerjee thanking them and saying that I was tendering my resignation for fear that I would incur blame for having accepted the university's new proposal for the sake of money. I also wrote that I did not know whether Shrimant Gaikwad Maharaj would have stopped me or not, and that I did not wish to ask him at all.

In Mumbai I met Dr Vasudev Anant Sukhtankar for the first time. I also came to know Shri Krishnarao Madgaonkar and his younger brother Shri Balwantrao Madgaonkar well.<sup>87</sup> This acquaintance changed rapidly into friendship. Madgaonkar let me have his bungalow at Borivli [a suburb of Mumbai, located on Salsette island], and I stayed there with my family for a month or two. At this time, Dr James H. Woods, professor at Harvard University in America, had come to stay in these parts to further pursue his study of Sanskrit: he had studied it along with Dr Sukhtankar in Germany earlier. Dr Sukhtankar had talked to him at length about me, so he was eager to meet me. When I came to Mumbai, his wife was unwell, so they were staying at [the hill station of] Matheran. At his request Dr Sukhtankar and I went there to meet him. Later, in November, he came and stayed at Taj Mahal Hotel, and came to Borivli every day to learn Pali.

<sup>87</sup> These were the sons of Dinanath's older brother Ramchandra Vishnu Madgaonkar, also a well-known social reformer and founder-member of the Prarthana Samaj (along with R.G. Bhandarkar and others). He had participated in reform initiatives such as the Age of Consent Bill and was a member of the Advisory Board of Pandita Ramabai's Sharada Sadan in Mumbai (1889–90). Balwant R. Madgaonkar was to become my grandfather: his daughter Nalini was married to Damodar D. Kosambi more than twenty years later.

But within a month his wife was unwell again. So I took lodgings in a chawl [i.e. tenement building] near the Prarthana Samaj for his convenience. He paid the rent, etc. He tried to propose that I should go to the Taj Mahal Hotel to teach him—through Dr Sukhtankar, who discouraged him. Realizing that I would not go to him to teach, and that raising this point would be detrimental to him, he never broached the subject with me. He only requested me to move to Mumbai [city] and I accepted for his sake. Dr Sukhtankar managed the whole matter of my lodgings. Naturally, I did not have to exert myself beyond moving from Borivli to Mumbai.

Dr Woods stayed on until the end of February 1909 and returned to his homeland via Japan. In March I sent my family to Goa and came to Pune with the intention of finding permanent lodgings there. At first I stayed in a small house in Sadashiv Peth and then moved to the upper floor of a house in Raviwar Peth. During this time I did not achieve much. Even so, I wrote out a large portion of *Vishuddhi-marga* in the Devnagari script, translated *Bodhicharya-avata*r into Marathi, wrote a small grammar of Pali in Sanskrit, and delivered five lectures at different places in Baroda. Three of these lectures have been published as a book under the title *Buddha, Dharma ani Sangha*.

In February 1910 an urgent letter came from Dr Woods that I was needed for research on *Vishuddhi-marga* started by [the late] Mr [H.C.] Warren, former professor at Harvard University, and should prepare to go there at once.<sup>88</sup> In the same letter he also provided all the information about the steamer voyage and his telegraph address, and told me to ask for money by telegram, giving me a code for different amounts in rupees. Accordingly I asked for Rs 1,800 by telegram, obtained permission from Shrimant Gaikwad Maharaj, and

<sup>88</sup> Mr Henry Clarke Warren had collected four sets of manuscripts of the Pali *Visuddhi-magga*, two each in the Burmese and Sinhalese scripts. After his death in 1899, Professor C.R. Lanman continued the work of preparing a critical edition of the text by collating these, as mentioned before. D. Kosambi, 'Preface', and E.P. Warren, 'Foreword', in *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosacariya*, edited by H.C. Warren, revised by Dharmananda [sic] Kosambi, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press (Harvard Oriental Series), 1950. Both the Preface and the Foreword are dated September 1927, but the actual publication was considerably delayed. Incidentally, Mr Warren does not seem to have been a professor at Harvard, or anywhere else.

started preparations for the voyage to America. About this time Maharaj himself was planning to go to America via Japan. He wanted me to go with him, but I could not because I had the money from America and because Dr Woods was to make direct arrangements for me to go via England. I decided to travel via England. Maharaj-saheb did not insist further and gladly gave me permission to go. Moreover, he also promised to help in case of need and told me to contact him by telegram. In addition he gifted me an amount of Rs 500 to publish the book *Buddha, Dharma ani Sangha*.

I never regretted having given up a job at Rs 250 per month and accepting a stipend of Rs 50 from Shrimant Gaikwad Maharaj. Had I not accepted this stipend, I would never have met Dr Woods and got the opportunity to go to America. Having stayed in Pune, I formed a close friendship with Dr Bhandarkar, and could introduce Pali into the curriculum of Bombay University through his efforts.

The patronage of Shrimant Gaikwad Maharaj has been responsible for fulfilling at least in part my intense desire to serve my fellow Maharashtrians. And it would be right to give him much of the credit for the dissemination of Pali in this region.

## 18. A Passage to America

It must seem something of a marvel that a person who had spent his first twenty-three years in a backward region like Goa and many later years in *maths* in Kashi or in Buddhist viharas should be in a position to travel to America. Readers may imagine my state of mind, considering that I had never worn trousers, walked in shoes, or eaten European style at a table. But, having faced numerous occasions to travel through unfamiliar countries and having observed the European style of living among some friends in Calcutta, I was not as frightened by this imminent journey as would be expected.

At this time Dr Sukhtankar was a teacher at Dayalsingh College in Lahore. He came to see me once, after I decided to go to America. I was terribly rushed, so he corrected the final proofs of *Buddha, Dharma ani Sangha* himself and prepared an errata. He also prepared a list of necessities on a voyage to England. Shri Balwantrao Madgaonkar helped me purchase the items on this list. I saw my family for the last time at Pune Station and went to Mumbai. From there I left for England on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1910 on the P. & O. Company's steamer *The Mantua*. My friend

Shri Balwantrao Madgaonkar and others had come to the harbour. Maharaja Holkar was on his way to England by the same steamer. He was accompanied by his sister Shrimant Sau Sitabai.<sup>89</sup> I did not know this—not that it would have helped. But my friend Viththal Ramji Shinde, a Prarthana Samaj missionary, was aware of it. With the view that the Shrimant family would help me on the steamer in case of need, he had written a letter to Shrimant Sau Sitabai-saheb and handed it to me at the dock. Dr Sukhtankar had also written to many of his acquaintances in England about me. Besides, Dr Woods had written to a former archdeacon at Liverpool to arrange things for me.

My Second Class cabin on the steamer had two other passengers—a Jain student on his way to England and his coreligionist who worked as a jeweller in Paris. Some people feel unwell on the first day because of the sea air, but I had no trouble at all during this voyage because I had been accustomed to three or four days on board ship on my way to and from Madras and Calcutta to Rangoon. Moreover, although I had a slight fever and dysentery for two days in Mumbai, I felt very well after voyaging in the Arabian Sea for twenty-four hours. The simple food on the steamer, such as bread and butter, agreed very well with me. Early in the morning we would get tea, fruit, and biscuits or two slices of bread. Then breakfast at ten, lunch at one, tea at four, dinner at seven, and supper at ten in the evening. Some European passengers enjoyed all this fully. But had I done so, my dysentery would have been aggravated to the point of my death. The Indian passengers and I ate only small quantities, two to three times a day. There was a young Deshastha Brahmin among us who, however, would not be outdone by the European passengers. He started polishing off ham and beef on the very first day, which astonished us all! I asked him in Marathi, 'You call yourself a Deshastha Brahmin and eat prohibited food on the steamer on the very first day—how can this be?' He replied, 'I had decided about four months ago to go to England, and since then I have accustomed myself to eating such food in restaurants in Mumbai.' We were silenced by this.

<sup>89</sup> In Maharashtra 'Saubhagyavati' is a title that precedes the name of a married woman whose husband is alive; the word is abbreviated to 'Sau'—approximating 'Mrs', except that it does not apply to widows.

The Jain merchant in my cabin did not touch the food on board, except for tea, biscuits, and bread. He had brought with him durable *bhakris* containing turmeric powder [i.e. *khakras*], sweetmeats, and a couple of baskets of fruit such as mangoes, oranges, and sweet lime. He managed with all this. The Jain student was not wholly orthodox, but he felt nervous at the sight of meat. Also on the steamer was the tutor of Holkar Maharaj, named Bafna (also a Jain). He too ate vegetarian food. I myself had no problem eating fish; but this was rarely available on board. Thus we three shared our taste in meals. After a couple of days we also arranged to get dal and rice through the chief steward. Bread, butter, fruit, dal and rice sufficed well for our subsistence.

As soon as we reached the Red Sea, I sent Shri Shinde's letter to Shrimant Sau Sitabai through Shri Bafna. The following day she sent me a message to visit her. I met her once or twice before the steamer entered the Mediterranean Sea. I did not like to frequent the First Class and was unwilling to go there. But one day there was a small storm in the Mediterranean Sea, which frightened Sitabai-saheb. Like me, she had bought a direct ticket to London. Someone had told her that there were even more dreadful storms in the Bay of Biscay. As a result she decided to change her ticket and go via Marseilles. But the biggest problem was that arrangements had been made for Maharaja Holkar, his European guardian, and his entourage to travel by a special train from Marseilles to Calais. Someone could have been left behind and Sitabai invited to go along to Calais; but I do not know why this was not done.

The problem was only the stretch from Marseilles to Calais—where the Maharaja's special train and our Express were to meet. So Sau Sitabai tried to get her ticket changed through the Maharaja's guardian. But that gentleman would not allow her to go alone. In the end she suggested my name. So the guardian asked me whether I would take responsibility for the lady's luggage, etc. I said, 'I am totally new and inexperienced. However, I will render whatever help I can.' For lack of an alternative, he told me to send him a telegram in case of any difficulty, and took the special train to Marseilles along with the Maharaja. Sau Sitabai had changed my ticket as well, at her own expense. This incident on board the steamer gave me the opportunity for a quick one-day trip through France.

The day we landed at Marseilles Harbour we heard news of the demise of Emperor Edward. Sau Sitabai was accompanied by her daughter Indirabai. The two of them had a large amount of luggage. The problem arose in the harbour when a high customs duty was demanded on their gold-threaded saris. In the end all the bags were locked again instead of being opened there, and sent through Thomas Cook directly to England to the place where Sitabai-saheb was to stay. I arranged for my trunk to be sent to Thomas Cook's office at Liverpool. After this was arranged, we went into the city and had breakfast first of all, and then went to see Marseilles. Sitabai's handbag contained some jewellery, which made her nervous. When the handbag was to be deposited with an attendant at museums, etc., she was wracked by suspicion. When she told me this, I said, 'Do not let anyone get an inkling that there is jewellery in your bag. Otherwise there is no hope of our getting out of here safely.'

We saw the sights of Marseilles with the help of Thomas Cook and went to a restaurant in the evening. Cook's interpreter had accompanied us here as well. He arranged with the restaurant owner to have special dishes made for us, such as spiced fresh sweet-peas. The same interpreter took us to the station after dinner and handed us over to another of Cook's agents who seated us in a First Class compartment. I think that Cook's interpreter and agent lightened our pockets to the tune of 10 or 20 francs at least! It appears that a fuss is made about tipping in France also, as in India.

The trains in France are not very comfortable. Although we were First Class passengers, we had no sleeping arrangements, and barely enough room to sit. There were a couple of other passengers in our compartment. One of them was a Muslim student. He knew France quite well and was very helpful. After this we did not need to 'seek refuge' with Thomas Cook's agent. The next morning we reached Paris. We hired a motor car to go from one station to another, and took a quick drive through the city. The Muslim student pointed out some sights to us on the way, but we had no time to get down and see them properly. Adjacent to the station for trains to Calais is a large restaurant where we all had breakfast. I tried to pay the bill, but the young Muslim student would not let me, and paid it himself. I cannot quite recall the time we reached Calais, but I do remember that P&O's special train

(which Holkar Maharaj had travelled by) and our Express were to meet there. Perhaps Maharaj had crossed the English Channel before us; but all of us were supposed to take the same train to Dover. So I made inquiries at the station about their special compartment and conveyed Sau Sitabai and her daughter to it, and sat in a nearby compartment myself. The station was extremely crowded. The porter who carried my luggage and I missed each other once, but in the end he scoured the whole train and found me. He handed over the luggage to me and asked me to check all my things. I saw that all was in order and paid him off.

I travelled alone up to Charing Cross station in London. There I met a couple of Punjabi students; one of them was a stranger like me. I rented a room in the Charing Cross Hotel for one night at eighteen shillings. The next morning I decided to leave and started directly for Liverpool. The only reason for this was to find out, with the help of Dr Woods' friend the archdeacon, where to stay, when to catch the steamer to America, etc. As soon as I reached Liverpool Station, I took Dr Woods' letter in my hand and started asking for the archdeacon's address written on it. But I discovered that this archdeacon had died more than a year ago! Then a carriage driver drove me to the house of the Bishop of Liverpool himself, and asked me to inquire about the present archdeacon. Bishop-saheb came out as soon as the carriage stopped at his door and invited me in. He offered me a chair in his drawing room and asked how he could help. When I asked him for the archdeacon's address, he said, 'The archdeacon is not with us any longer, but do tell me if I can be of any help.' I said, 'I have just arrived in this country, so please suggest a suitable hotel that you know of. You have probably heard that we Indians are mostly vegetarians.' Bishop-saheb said, 'I have read and heard a great deal about Indians, and feel great respect for them. There is a Temperance Hotel next door, which will suit you very well. Even so, tell me if you find any problem there, and I will think of something else.' He helped me into my overcoat, and came out to instruct the carriage-driver to take me to the Temperance Hotel.

After Bishop-saheb went inside, the carriage-driver said in great surprise, 'I'm astonished that this gentleman, the Bishop of this city, treats you with such respect!' I told him that it was the characteristic

of great men. The carriage-driver stopped at the Temperance Hotel and impressed upon the manager that Bishop-saheb had sent me and that I should be well looked after. When I paid him the standard fare, he left without a word of complaint.

On board the steamer I had met some Indians, which helped pass the time. I had books with me, but they had been packed in a box and sent to Thomas Cook's office. So I had no means of amusing myself. Going for walks seemed dangerous, considering that it was an unfamiliar place. I located Thomas Cook's office and inquired about my luggage, but it was yet to arrive. The hotel provided some books, but they were not to my liking. I read some newspapers, but they contained mostly articles about Emperor Edward's demise, and I could not follow the other articles, not being sufficiently acquainted with the politics in England. In sum, I felt like a prisoner in the hotel during the first couple of days.

On the third or fourth day, as I sat in the drawing room, a gentleman greeted me and struck up an acquaintance, inquiring where I had come from. I was delighted and surprised to see this first Englishman to introduce himself in this fashion. But later I discovered that he was Dutch, not English, and had come to Liverpool in connection with his business. He was an accountant in a firm in Brussels and was required to spend a few days in Liverpool until some documents arrived from there. In accordance with the rule that '*Persons of a similar nature form friendship in times of difficulty*' [Skt], we got on well together. He showed me a variety of localities in Liverpool as well as some good and inexpensive restaurants. The Temperance Hotel required guests to have breakfast there; one could eat the other meals elsewhere. Therefore once in a while we went to a vegetarian restaurant to appease our hunger.

One day my Dutch companion said to me, 'Although the English are so rich, there is also a good deal of poverty here. The condition of the workers is not satisfactory. Despite being a businessman, I agree totally with writers like Karl Marx.' I asked, 'Who is this Karl Marx?' Thereupon he said with a very surprised countenance, 'Oh, you don't know Karl Marx! He is the founder of modern socialism. People like Keir Hardy in England are his followers.' I said, 'But what is this socialism? There is no such movement in India at all.' He said, 'If you

spend a few weeks in Europe, you will automatically come to know about this movement. But if you wish, come with me and I'll buy you some books on the subject. It will not take you long to understand socialism after spending five or six pence.' With these words the gentleman took me to a nearby shop and bought me a couple of books by Blatchford. Of these, I greatly liked *Merry England* (priced only at 3 pence). I read it twice before going to America. But that doubled my desire to learn more about socialism. After reaching America I read many books and articles on socialism by various authors, as well as John Spargo's biography of Karl Marx.

Dr Woods had arranged for me to go straight from Liverpool to Boston by the Leyland Company. But the company's steamer had left the same day I reached Liverpool, so I was compelled to wait a week or more for the next steamer. My Dutch friend also left the Temperance Hotel for some other. So I planned to see Manchester in the meanwhile, and went there, leaving all my luggage at the Temperance Hotel and taking only a few clothes with me. Dr Sukhtankar had already written to his father-in-law, the Reverend Bishop, about me; and I also had a letter for him from Mrs Sukhtankar. After disembarking from the train I took a tram and without much difficulty reached the Reverend Bishop's house, which was located at quite a distance. Reverend-saheb thought it a marvel that I had found it at all! He arranged for me to stay with him and showed me the whole city of Manchester over a day.

The next day he took me to the Principal of the Unitarian College. While introducing me the Reverend Bishop said I was on my way to America to conduct research regarding Pali texts, etc. Thereupon the Principal said, 'Why should the Americans feel such love for the languages of these Jungle people [i.e. barbarians]?' Just then he went inside to see to the lunch arrangements. The Reverend Bishop was a vegetarian and when he said that I did not eat meat either, Principal-saheb said, 'What is the point in you grass-eaters being here?' I did not like his behaviour at all. There was a student sitting next to me at the table; he started to console me. I said, 'If this is the behaviour of the principal of a religious college, one may imagine how ordinary British officials behave towards poor peasants. This kind of behaviour was probably tolerated during the last century, but the young generation of Indians cannot tolerate it at all. If eminent Englishmen feel that expressing



contempt for Indians at all times proves their superiority, they are mistaken!' Principal-saheb was sitting nearby and is likely to have heard my words. After lunch he took the Reverend Bishop and me to a drawing room upstairs and when we were all seated, he turned to me and said amicably, 'Can I help you in any way?' I replied, 'I expect nothing from you. I would not have come here had Bishop-saheb not insisted. As I am his guest, I had to come here and trouble you unnecessarily.' Then after making small talk, Principal-saheb gave us leave. He came with us to the college gate, shook hands again, and left us.

I spent another couple of days in Manchester, but in a rented room and not in Bishop-saheb's house. Bishop-saheb found me a room in the house of a woman of his acquaintance. Forty miles from Manchester is the town of Lytham where Shri Ramchandra Vishnu Madgaonkar (Balwantrao's father) used to live. After spending a couple of days in Manchester, I went there to meet him. He made me stay with him for three or four days. Then I went directly to Liverpool without going back to Manchester, and after a couple of days there I started on the appointed day for Boston by the Leyland Company's steamer *The Devonian*.

Not many passengers travel to America in this season. In May and June many come from America to Europe, but not the other way around. Our steamer had only about ten passengers. Dr Woods had reserved the best cabin on the deck for me. It had three berths, but I was the sole occupant. The ocean was so calm that one felt one was sailing on a large lake. However, as we approached America, the fog became really troublesome. Steamers nearby were not visible in the fog and had to be alerted by sailors frequently blowing a whistle called a 'fog-horn'. It disturbed sleep at times, but after a day or two we got accustomed to that as well.

As our steamer approached Boston, an official of wireless telegraphy—a young Englishman—became very friendly with me and elicited information as to where I had come from, where I was going, etc. When our steamer docked, the customs officers came for their inspection. I was engaged in packing my bags when the steward notified us that the officers had come. The chief officer asked me whether I had \$ 50. I said, 'I have 80 dollars, and I can get more if necessary from

my friend at the dock.' He said, 'Don't be offended. This is our government rule. You don't need to show me the dollars, because I trust you.' After this conversation we got down. Dr Woods was a little late, but he came in about ten minutes—and at the same time there arrived a couple of newspaper reporters! They showered me with questions. When they started asking whether I was the Indian gentleman bound for Harvard University, I thought Dr Woods had given this news to the papers. And I asked him, just to allay my suspicion. But he said, 'I did not see any newspaper reporters at all, and even if I had, I would not have told them anything. But most newspapers carried news of you yesterday. Now consider it your good fortune that our newspaper editors did not publish a strange, imaginary photograph of you along with the news!' This explanation removed all doubt as to why the wireless telegraphy official was making inquiries about me. I extricated myself by directing the reporters to Dr Woods, who got rid of them with a few words on our way out. Even so, they noted down my address and put it in their pockets!

Dr Woods took me to the Harvard Union Club after giving all my luggage into the care of an express company. (An express company conveys luggage to any place one wants. There are many such companies in America, and large pieces of luggage have to be sent through them.) I was to stay there for a few days, but within about five days an agreement was reached between Professor Lanman and Dr Woods that I should be given a room in Warren House. This room was very inconvenient and I did not like living there at all. So Dr Woods went with me to a building called Felton Hall and got me a good room at the rent of Rs 60 [or \$ 20] per month.

When my lodgings were thus taken care of, I started working on *Visuddhi-magga* with Professor Lanman. For the first week or two he did not regard my work as important. Initially he was even unwilling to pay me from the Warren Fund, as Dr Woods told me. But after he realized my usefulness, he agreed to pay me \$ 800 [or Rs 2,400] per year, all told. I had to send Rs 60 per month for my family's expenses at Pune; and after paying my rent, it was difficult to manage all the expenses. Even so, I spent about ten months in this state.

I frequently shared with Dr Woods my decision not to stay any longer at Cambridge (i.e. Harvard) after the work of making a critical

edition of *Visuddhi-magga* was completed. He realized that Professor Lanman had offended me by giving me a room in Warren House and by paying me a paltry amount for expenses. But instead of pressing me to stay on, he tried to do so through a Japanese gentleman named Mr Okakura. Okakura was the official in charge of the Oriental section of the museum at Boston; and I was on very friendly terms with him. He was especially fond of me because, for one thing, he liked all Oriental people, and for another, I was a Buddhist. On one occasion he repeatedly insisted, on Dr Woods' advice, that I should stay on at Harvard for a few more years. Then I told him in detail all that had happened, which made him sad. Also, he thought I had made a mistake by not signing a contract before leaving India. He said, 'What is done cannot be undone. But if Lanman is not prepared to treat you well, return to your country. I will immediately pay you for the necessary expenses. If you wish, I will meet the President of Harvard University and inform him of what has happened.'

I did not think it proper to carry a complaint to the president through Okakura. But I decided to return home with Okakura's help if Professor Lanman did not make a contract through the president; and broached the subject with Lanman when I got the opportunity. He was very angry, but did make a contract, signed by the president, as I had suggested. The terms of the contract were that I should receive a salary of Rs 500 per month, i.e. \$ 2,000 per year, from the day I left Mumbai. I received about \$ 800 immediately, after deducting the money already paid to me for expenses. I deposited this amount in a bank. Since that time I received my salary regularly every month from the University Bursar.

The second question was that both names—Lanman's and mine—should appear on the cover as editors of *Visuddhi-magga*. Okakura suggested that this question should also be settled with the question of salary. But I was convinced that this would displease Lanman so much that he would refuse to draw up a contract. So I thought it desirable to leave it open for the time being. But at the end, when the work was completed, I asked Lanman about the credits on the cover. He said he wanted to publish his own name as the editor, with an acknowledgement that the work was done with the help of Warren's manuscript copy

and with my assistance. I said, 'This would not be appropriate at all. The work has progressed thus far because of Warren's great effort and generosity. My salary has been paid out of the fund set up by him. So the book should be published either under the names of the trio Warren-Lanman-Kosambi, or only under Warren's name, mentioning in the preface the changes we have made.' Professor Lanman did not like this at all. He was so furious that he started cursing me.<sup>90</sup>

Since that day I decided not to meet Lanman. Suspecting that he might plot something and get me into trouble, I told Dr Woods all that had transpired. Money had already been paid and a berth reserved for me on the Hamburg American Company's steamer *The Hamburg*, leaving New York on 4<sup>th</sup> January [1912]. But the above incident occurred about ten days prior to the date. Dr Woods thought that I should go to New York at once and spend the remaining time there, so that there would be no need to fear Lanman. I did not like this advice at all. I wanted to meet many friends and had accepted several invitations. To leave it all and run away seemed totally unacceptable, and I said to Dr Woods, 'If Lanman wants to take revenge, let him, by all means. I am not afraid. I am prepared to face whatever difficulties come my way. But I will never do anything as cowardly as running away to New York.'

Subsequently I stayed on in Cambridge until it was almost time to catch the steamer. I accepted the invitations of all my friends, met the people I wanted to, and calmly collected my belongings. During this time Professor Lanman sent me a couple of letters of invitation. But I did not open them at all, suspecting them to contain some threat; and sent him a message through Dr Woods that I would not open them until I had boarded the steamer. He again sent me a dinner invitation through Dr Woods, but I sent a message that I was not prepared to go to his house alone and would go only if Dr Woods also came along. In short, Professor Lanman and I did not have a quiet meeting till the end,

<sup>90</sup> Ultimately the Harvard University publication (delayed until 1950) carried H.C. Warren's name as editor, and Dharmanand Kosambi's as the one who had revised the text (and who wrote the Preface). Lanman's name does not appear on the cover or title page.

either at his house or elsewhere. He came to my room a couple of times, but our conversation did not progress beyond a few words. I left Cambridge about four days before the steamer was to sail. I had planned to spend these four days in New York City and see it properly. Dr Woods had arranged in advance for me to stay at the Harvard Club in New York. There was a Jewish student named Weisbuch at Harvard, whose father and brother lived in New York City. They came to the station in response to Weisbuch's letter, found me, and took me to the Harvard Club. As long as I was in New York City, one or the other of them would come and take me out.

One day Mr Weisbuch took me to the Hippodrome—an enormous theatre which shows scenes from different parts of the world, as for example, the maharajas in India going in Dasara processions, real elephants and horses, structures almost the size of the Taj Mahal. Then follow scenes from the zenanas of Turkish sultans, their hundreds of wives, some marvellous acrobatics, etc. Elephants, horses, camels, and such other living animals, numerous men and women—all these are seen in one place within this huge theatre. Thus I saw many sights in New York City and boarded the steamer on the appointed day.

Now it would not be inappropriate to say something about my daily routine in America. When I stayed in Felton Hall at Harvard, it was initially arranged for me to get meals there three times a day and tea twice a day, according to the European custom. Most of the dishes contained meat, so that I had to subsist on boiled potatoes, bread, butter, and similar stuff. The cost of meals was \$ 16 (or Rs 48) per month, but I thought the situation unsatisfactory. A Chinese student living in the same building told me that this arrangement was unnecessary. If one orders whatever one likes from the store, it is delivered at home; one can thus get a simple meal at a very low price. I liked this advice and ordered a quart of milk daily from Mr Warren's sister's dairy and an item of food called 'shredded wheat'—which is like vermicelli made of wheat—from a store; and mostly subsisted on this diet twice a day.

After getting up in the morning, I would eat two shredded wheat biscuits and drink a glass of cold milk. Then I would work in Professor Lanman's [personal] library from 8:30 to 12:30. Then I returned to my lodgings, drank a glass of milk, and went for my exercise. During

summer my regular exercise was rowing, and in winter I went to the gymnasium. The reason for my choosing afternoons was that one had to take a shower after exercising. In the boat club the showers were in a large room and at other times the place was crowded with students. All the students showered naked, and I had to do the same. But bathing naked in the presence of others is contrary to our cultural conditioning, and I did not like it at all. The other difficulty was getting a row-boat. But from 12 to 2, I was usually alone in the boat club, during which time I could get a boat and shower by myself. In the gymnasium showering was no problem; I had been given a separate room set aside for faculty members. But the best time to get the different kinds of apparatus for exercise was also from 12 to 2. So I went there during this time to exercise as well. After working out, I would go to a cafeteria for a slice of fruit bread and a cup of cocoa. I would spend the evening reading in the Harvard Library or at home. Late in the evening I usually worked on *Visuddhi-magga*, either making a decision about difficult passages or tracing later interpolations.

But this routine changed on Sundays. On this day most Americans get up late, although I got up at about seven. But I went to Professor Lanman's house a little later than usual. After working there until about eleven, I would go to some church—usually Appleton Chapel—to hear a sermon. This chapel belongs to Harvard University and does not discriminate among Christian denominations. Jewish rabbis are also invited there to preach. There is a great opportunity here to listen to the sermons of famous preachers in America. When the university is closed, however, there are no good sermons other than the usual services. Therefore during the summer break I would go to some other church to hear the sermon. On Sunday evenings I would go to hear the lectures held at various institutions in Boston: thus I would attend a lecture arranged by the Rationalist Society one Sunday, and a lecture at the Socialist Society the next. Sometimes I was able to hear two or three lectures the same day because of their different timings.

The main subject of my reading was the social sciences. I read many books on the subject, and also bought many. Rather, one could say that I was obsessed by it. During this time I also wrote articles in *Subodha Patrika* and *Sudharak* about how the condition of workers in Mumbai

could be improved through the principle of co-operation.<sup>91</sup> I would constantly ponder over how the loss of the human capital in India could be stemmed and utilized towards physical and mental happiness. I was aware that our country was not an easy place for putting ideas into practice, and that I did not possess that capacity. But such thoughts—or dreams, if you will—would give me extraordinary happiness. Even now I love to think about how to improve the condition of poverty-ridden people in India, how to obtain the benefits of education, etc., for our backward fellow countrymen—and for a moment I forget my physical and mental unhappiness.

Thus the biggest advantage I derived from going to America was an interest in the social sciences. Had I stayed on in India, my life would have been spent only in religious thoughts. I would certainly have forgotten the principle that '*The body is the primary instrument of religion.*' [Skt] But I understood the principle clearly after going to America and had the opportunity to understand its interpretation by Western scientists. This should not be taken to mean that I was totally dominated by the principle that '*The body is the primary instrument of religion*' or '*Food makes all creatures* [literally, 'all beings exist because they partake of food', Skt]. It is only that I lost my complete earlier ignorance of this principle, and that I started giving it due importance. Even today I believe in the principle that mankind will not progress without religious advancement. But it is almost impossible to achieve religious progress by neglecting the body or mistreating it.

*The meditation of a man—whose food is adequate, dwelling place is adequate, effort and action are adequate, sleeping and waking [hours] are adequate—is free from suffering.* [Skt]<sup>92</sup>

This principle should be applied to the whole society as well. At the same time, one should remember that man's progress depends upon his circumstances, in keeping with the principle woven into the [old

<sup>91</sup> *Subodha Patrika* was the Anglo-Marathi weekly paper of the Prarthana Samaj published in Mumbai, and the article referred to is included in translation in this volume. *Sudharak* was the Anglo-Marathi weekly founded by G.G. Agarkar in Pune; the issues for this period are unfortunately not available.

<sup>92</sup> This is a quotation from the *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 6, Verse 17.

Marathi] verse: *You live in the marketplace and call yourself a celibate!*' For example, how would a worker—who slogs twelve hours a day to earn barely enough to survive and who lives in a filthy chawl—achieve religious progress? First, adequate food and activity have to be arranged for him, and then he has to be moved out of the filthy chawl, which is detrimental to religiosity, and kept in airy surroundings. Only if this is done is it possible for him to give up addictions such as drink, and achieve progress on the path to religion.

2A Clarification (*Khulasa*):  
Excerpts, 1937–1938<sup>1</sup>

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1. On Socialism (Events of 1910–1911)<sup>2</sup>

Until May 1910, I had no idea at all what socialism was. Our social reform consisted chiefly of abolishing child marriage, allowing widow remarriage, and eliminating caste discrimination; and the objective of political reform was to obtain Home Rule. The problems of the poverty and ignorance of the masses were considered to be secondary in importance. Our leaders believed that these would be automatically solved when we gained swaraj. Naturally, no one was aware of the

<sup>1</sup> The complete text of 'Khulasa', published serially in the Marathi weekly of Mumbai entitled *Prakash*, is no longer available. Extracts from it (sometimes punctuated by comments) appear in J.S. Sukhathankar's *Dharmanand*. Selected excerpts from these are translated here without further omissions; ellipses are added where omissions in the original are suspected.

<sup>2</sup> Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, pp. 206–9 ('Khulasa', chapter 6, *Prakash Saptahik*, 14 November 1937).

importance of the philosophy of socialism. The situation changed only after the Russian Revolution.

I came to the path of socialism unexpectedly. On my first trip to America, I obtained information about socialism at Liverpool . . . From then on I was quite obsessed with reading books—large and small—about socialism. After reaching America I located socialist societies as quickly as possible. Dr Woods' brother-in-law called himself a Christian Socialist; I obtained a great deal of information from him. I also bought useful books available at the Socialist Book Depot and read as many of them as possible. However, I could not understand Karl Marx's principal book, *The Capital*, although I followed the gist of most of his theses from clarifications provided by other authors.

This new philosophy introduced a remarkable revolution in my thinking. It automatically clarified certain questions, as for example why our brave kings and princes could not effectively combat the British, why our history could not be repeated no matter how much we sang its praises, and why it is ineffectual to conduct today's politics with the help of these [praises] or of religious celebrations such as the Ganesh festival [introduced by Tilak].

[. . .] The war we have to fight now cannot be fought by beating the drum of past history. British historians would be fools to be frightened by these drums. The real [political] strength is concentrated in the union of workers; and fortunately the national pride which would deter it has not taken deep root in India yet. We possess caste-based pride, but it is not strong enough to combat the principle of socialism. If we bury it and unite the working class in India on the principle of socialism in order to eradicate poverty, then alone will the British have to think whether 'To be or not to be.' It is unlikely that they will be deterred by five or six of their compatriots being assassinated.

[. . .] It was not in me to mix freely with people. That is why I thought I should achieve the task of propagating [this ideology] through our leaders. Lokamanya Tilak was incarcerated at Mandalay at the time, and his place [as editor of *Kesari*] was occupied [literally, adorned] by Shri Narasimha Chintaman Kelkar. We had become acquainted in 1909 when I was in Pune. He made me deliver a lecture during the Ganesh Festival that year. Then on, I met him occasionally. When I was preparing to go to America, he invited me home to a meal

and gave me a fond farewell. While I was in America, he sent me *Kesari* regularly. In the belief that giving the philosophy of Karl Marx into such hands would benefit not Maharashtra alone but all of India, I sent him some basic books on socialism. He wrote back saying he would use them when the occasion arose.

Within a couple of weeks I read in *Kesari* the capitalists of Mumbai being compared to a swelling caused by poisonous blood, and felt very happy that socialism was having a good effect on Tatyasaheb [Kelkar]. But other than this simile, I saw nothing else about socialism in the ensuing issues.

## 2. Professorship at Fergusson College (1912)<sup>3</sup>

[After Dharmanand returned from the USA, Viththal Ramji Shinde suggested that he should try to get a job at Fergusson College, and wrote a letter of recommendation to a professor of his acquaintance there.]

After a few days, Principal R.P. Paranjpye wrote to the effect that: 'We are willing to appoint you as a permanent employee of Fergusson College. We have increased the salary of Life Members to Rs 100 [per month], but you will receive a salary of Rs 75, and you have to agree to the condition of teaching in the College for at least five years.'

We thought of Fergusson College as an excellent model of the spirit of sacrifice. After reading of the sacrifices made by those like [G.G.] Agarkar, [G.K.] Gokhale, [D.K.] Karve, and [R.P.] Paranjpye, we would spontaneously exclaim, 'Bravo, Bravo'. But I was a little confused by the above letter. I did not have a BA or MA degree, so it was not wrong that I could not be made a Life Member. The condition of serving for five years was also appropriate. But I could not unravel the puzzle that they received Rs 100 but would give me only Rs 75. I did not have degrees, but did I not have a family like other professors? Salary should be a means not of enhancing one's stature, but of satisfying the necessities of life. Were the Life Members affected by a

<sup>3</sup> Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, pp. 191–3 ('Khulasa', chapter 4, *Prakash Saptahik*, 5 September 1937).

Superiority Complex? For otherwise I could not fathom the reason for their offering me only Rs 75.

It was fruitless to wonder about the possible thinking of the Deccan Education Society's Life Members. What I needed to decide was whether or not to work for Rs 75 per month. If I accepted the job, I would be able, for one thing, to propagate the Pali language in Maharashtra. Secondly, this was a good opportunity to show off a sacrifice worth Rs 25 more than that of the Life Members, in the service of the Deccan Education Society! But how were the expenses to be managed?

We then lived on the first floor of a narrow house in Moti Chowk in Raviwar Peth. The rent was Rs 6 per month. Having experienced the standard of living in America, I naturally found this accommodation too small. But no other convenient place could be had at such a low rent. Again, there was the increasing expense of the children's education. Therefore it was necessary to consider how we could manage on Rs 75 per month. With the salary I had received from Harvard University, I had managed my expenses there and my travel back to Mumbai, and also repaid my father's debt. I then had a balance of Rs 1,500 left. This money would cover a deficit of Rs 25 per month for five years. Therefore, without further worry, I accepted the service of the Deccan Education Society for five years.

[This plan did not meet with Dr Bhandarkar's approval. He was at Indore with his son at the time, and Dharmanand went there to meet him before joining his duties.]

Dr Bhandarkar said, 'It would have been better had you consulted me before accepting this position. You will get some students in Fergusson College and will be able to propagate Pali to some extent. The Life Members will also treat you with courtesy. But how will you manage with 75 rupees? You would not like to live in a small place as you did earlier, and your family responsibilities are also increasing. Have you given this a thought? The Life Members cannot manage with Rs 75, which is why they have increased their own salaries to Rs 100.'

[Dharmanand told him of his savings of Rs 1,500, and added, 'Why should one mind making a sacrifice in the service of the Deccan Education Society? I would be happy to do so.' Dr Bhandarkar did not argue, and gave him his blessings for success in his new task.

About this time, Gaikwad Maharaj of Baroda had come to

Mumbai and Dharmanand went there to meet him. He too was surprised and said:]

'What have you done? Should you not have met me before accepting this job? You have worked at Harvard University in America, and now you set your worth at Rs 75 per month—do you think this is right?'

'Maharaj-saheb, it was my mistake that I did not meet you immediately upon my return. Please forgive me. But I do not think I have made a mistake in accepting a job in Fergusson College. If salary is a criterion of a person's worth, those like Agarkar and Gokhale would have a very low worth! I think my worth would be determined by my work and not my salary. If I do not succeed in my work, I would not at least incur the charge of having benefited from a fat salary.'

### 3. Conversations with Gandhiji (1924)<sup>4</sup>

[In 1924 Gandhiji was operated upon at Sassoon Hospital in Pune. Dharmanand went to visit him along with Muni Jinavajayaji, his colleague at Gandhiji's Gujarat Vidyapeeth. On this occasion, Gandhiji said:]

'In prison Shankarlal Banker used to talk about you. He said you are a great scholar of Buddhist literature.'

'It is true that I have made a close study of Buddhist literature. But you are the one who understands its essence; I am only a carrier! Tukaram-buva has said, "*A bullock carries sacks of sugar, but gets only hay in the end. A camel carries boxes of goods, but has to eat thorns!*"'

[Gandhiji later went to stay in Shet Narottam Morarji's bungalow at Juhu, a suburb of Mumbai. He asked Dharmanand to meet him there.]

Accordingly, I met him. It was evening, and he took me along for a walk. I seized the opportunity and said to him, 'You claim that the Bhagavad Gita expounds non-violence, but I don't agree. Lokamanya's

<sup>4</sup> Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, pp. 200–1 ('Khulasa', chapter 8, *Prakash Saptahik*, 27 March 1938).

[Tilak's] view seems more logical. Arjuna refused to kill his kinsmen, and Shri Krishna counselled him. Finally his confusion was dispelled and he destroyed his adversaries. I do not see where non-violence enters the picture. It is very dangerous to base non-violence upon this book.'

Gandhiji said, 'I understand the Bhagavad Gita differently. Lokamanya's interpretation may not seem acceptable to all.'

I said, 'Why should we enter into this debate? Let scholars find different interpretations and quarrel, if they wish. It is their profession. You have to demonstrate, by your example, how politics can be conducted along the path of truth and non-violence. Whether or not it has a basis in [sacred] books, what matters is that people should accept your experiment.'

This conversation ended there and he suddenly asked me, 'Why are you thinking of going back to America?' Without waiting for my answer, he said, 'I know that America is a land of enjoyment. One gets many objects of enjoyment there. Even England, which is not as prosperous as America, offers plenty of enjoyment. There are lavish banquets in London sometimes, which waste a tremendous amount of money. That is why I call Western countries the Land of Enjoyment [*bhoga-bhumi*] and our country the Land of Action [*karma-bhumi*], because the objects of enjoyment are rare here, but there is a good opportunity to endure hardship for the sake of the people.'

I said, 'My objective in going to America is not to enjoy life. I have already spent about five and a half years there on two visits. I never cared for the enjoyment there; I would be happier enduring hardships here. But this is not the time for it. I worked in Fergusson College for six years at Rs 75 per month. Now I have to accept Rs 350 per month at Gujarat Vidyapeeth which is backed by your name; I consider that a calamity and feel disturbed. Had my son not been in America, I could have worked at a very low salary and lived in contentment. But in the present situation I often think that I should earn money in America until my children's education is completed, and then serve the Vidyapeeth with an easy mind.'

Gandhiji said, 'Nobody has complained to me that you draw a big salary. This is your own complaint, and I can understand it. But treat it as a religious compulsion [*dharma-sankat*].'

#### 4. Salt Satyagraha at Shirode (1930)<sup>5</sup>

[As a protest against the British government's salt tax and other unfair practices, Gandhiji organized the Salt March at Dandi in Gujarat on 12 March 1930. It was followed by similar salt marches on the Konkan coast near Goa, in which Dharmanand participated.]

I had close contact with the volunteers in the camp at Vile Parle [a suburb of Mumbai], so I often went there. In April—I think in the last week—the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal held its meeting in the camp at Parle. During discussions with them, I learned that the leaders of the camp at Shirode—Shri Deogirikar, Shri Appasaheb Patwardhan, and Shri Raut—were arrested by the government, and the camp was about to disintegrate. Believing myself to be of some help in this matter, I decided to go there immediately and asked the organizers of the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal for a letter [of introduction]. They promised to give it later, but did not till the end, saying, 'You can proceed. We will send the letter to the camp at Malvan and also send a telegram.'

I had already made a firm plan to go to Malvan, and had no time to wonder about the fickle behaviour of the Maharashtra Mandal. But the boat reaches Malvan at about two in the morning and I was worried whether I would even be able to disembark at such an hour and find a place to sit. Shri Prabhakar Madgaonkar [son of B.R. Madgaonkar of Mumbai] knew Shri Wagh a little and had the latter send a telegram to his relatives to the effect that 'A gentleman is to arrive at Malvan by today's boat. Please receive him and take him home.'

Travelling with me was a gentleman named Shri Vishwanath Rangaji Sankholkar from the princely state of Sawantwadi. He knew Prabhakar very well and also knew about the telegram, although he did not know me personally because we had never met. He introduced himself and said, 'I know Wagh's relatives very well. When they come on board, I'll wake you up; until then you can sleep in peace. If no one comes to receive you, I'll get down at Malvan instead of going on to

<sup>5</sup> Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, pp. 210–18 ('Khulasa', chapter 11, *Prakash Saptahik*, 28 August 1938).

Vengurla, arrange things for you, and then go to Vengurla. Don't worry.' Shri Sankholkar probably did not sleep that night. I too woke up when we docked at Malvan Harbour. I did not have much luggage, so it did not take me long to pack. Two gentlemen came and started asking around whether anyone had come from Wagh of Mumbai. Sankholkar was waiting for them. He brought them to me and said, 'These two belong to Wagh's family; they will arrange everything for you. Their house is right next to the camp. Stay with them tonight and go to the camp tomorrow morning. I shall not get down here, but continue on to Vengurla.' I thanked Shri Sankholkar for having taken such good care of me, and went to Shri Wagh's house with the two gentlemen.

The next morning Wagh's relatives conveyed me to the camp—which turned out to be Shri Bapusaheb Samant's house. He had handed it over to the Satyagraha Mandal, and was subsequently sentenced to three months' imprisonment and sent to Ratnagiri Jail. Now this camp and all the other camps around were under the charge of Shri Annasaheb Sahasrabuddhe. He had gone out to look after the smaller camps and someone else was in charge [just then]. I went to him and inquired first of all whether a letter or telegram had come from the Maharashtra Mandal. I received a reply in the negative, and began wondering whether or not I should stay in this camp. But I had to stay there that day, for lack of an alternative. I needed time to decide where to go. However, news of my arrival spread automatically throughout the town. Some eminent people of Malvan came to meet me. A gentleman invited me to a meal at his house the following day. I said, 'This camp has received no message from the Maharashtra Mandal, which means that I cannot stay here much longer. I'm thinking of leaving tomorrow, so how can I accept your invitation?' He said, 'If you don't like the idea of staying in the camp, come to my house. There's a minor problem, but we will manage somehow. However, I don't think there is any problem for you to stay here. I'll arrange for your meals. My son will bring food for you from my house every day. I request you to spend at least two days in Malvan before moving on. There are many like myself here, who have heard your name but have not seen you in person. They'll all be very happy to meet you.'

The following day I went to this gentleman's house for a meal. His



efforts and those of others resulted in a meeting being arranged in the camp, which I addressed. Afterwards some people insisted that I make a couple of speeches in different parts of the town. They said that the Maratha and Bhandari communities there were quite advanced, and that my speeches would help to organize [i.e. mobilize] them. I was unable to gauge the benefit of my efforts for the people of Malvan, but my own knowledge would undoubtedly be augmented by an acquaintance with the people there; so I gladly accepted the invitation.

On the second or third evening, while I was addressing a large meeting near a salt pan, Shri Atmaram Bhaskar Pandit arrived from the camp at Shirode. Shri Annasaheb Sahasrabuddhe was also present. After the meeting he and Shri Pandit had a long conversation about the possibility of the camp at Shirode closing down. The people of the town were dissatisfied and the camp could not continue unless Annasaheb himself went and stayed there. But Annasaheb had to supervise several camps near Malvan, so he pointed at me. But I had no wish whatsoever to be the leader of any camp. My plan was not to give up my status as a volunteer as far as possible. Even so, at Annasaheb's insistence I agreed to spend a few days in the camp at Shirode. I left the next afternoon and reached there at about 8 p.m.

The people of Shirode were eagerly awaiting our arrival. At the news that Shri Pandit had brought Annasaheb along, all the people from the surrounding area immediately gathered in the temple hall and started inquiring about the future arrangements for the camp. Annasaheb introduced me to the people, and proposed that for the time being charge of the camp be handed over to me with the unanimous consent of the townspeople. Shri Pandit seconded his proposal, and the decision seemed to be acceptable to all because no one opposed it.

Shri Pandit managed all the work of the camp. I was only required to deliver the evening address. Dr Bhagwat looked after the eating arrangements. There were about thirty-five volunteers; of these, a small division of about ten volunteers had been stationed at Reddy. The volunteers would go and propagate the cause in villages, though that was hardly necessary. The enthusiasm of the villagers seemed to be unparalleled. Every meeting would be attended by thousands. At the evening meetings at Shirode, the temple hall would be thickly crowded, and at times people would even stand outside!

[The satyagraha at Shirode was scheduled for 12 to 22 May 1930. At least 150 volunteers were arrested on the first day, and many more on the following day. On 14 May, Dharmanand led his batch straight to the salt pan. Immediately the Collector ordered him to be arrested and kept in police custody at a distance, and charged the volunteers in his batch with lathis or batons. Then arrived Soman's batch; again he was arrested and the rest lathi-charged.]

This new development enraged the Maratha community in the villages of Reddy and Shirode. One or two were about to attack the Collector and kill him! The crowd kept on burgeoning, but I could do nothing because I was in police custody at quite a distance. I only watched the unrestrained crowd dejectedly. The only good thing was that Shri A.B. Pandit had not been arrested. He took along a couple of local people and made the crowd move back with great difficulty. I could clearly hear his words, 'Please move back!' I could also see that he and his companions had spread their arms to stop the people trying to rush forward.

Just then, one of the local people became agitated by the scene, rushed to the camp, and said to Senapati Gokhale, 'How can you sit here quietly with the volunteers? There the police have made a lathi charge and killed volunteers!' These words agitated Senapati Gokhale as well; he took along all the volunteers he could, and attacked the salt pan from all sides! He totally forgot that we were engaged in a non-violent satyagraha, and that it was crucial to keep calm! His attack resembled the way the Marathas [of old] used to attack a fort, and that was totally unsuited to the occasion, needless to say.

When our volunteers started running wildly through the mud towards the salt pan, the police too got excited and hit out mercilessly with their lathis. One volunteer from Khandesh received more than thirty wounds. Although he looks strong today, his legs have become weak as a result of the beating.

Collector-saheb stopped the lathi charge when all the volunteers were utterly defeated, ordered the arrest of Shri Soman, and let me go. So I said to him, 'What are you doing? Once you have arrested me, you have to institute an inquiry and punish me for my offence. If you don't arrest me and take me along, I shall carry away salt right here in your presence so that you would have to arrest me. Save yourself the trouble

and arrest me now!' The Collector replied, 'I had ordered your arrest only to protect you from the lathi charge. Now there is no need to keep you under arrest. Whether to take you to court or not depends on my discretion. If you want to take salt, carry away as much as you wish.' I could do nothing. I returned to the camp in a dejected frame of mind.

Dr Dalvi and the Red Cross volunteers in the villages around carried the wounded volunteers to the nearby Samarth Ashram. There they were treated by Dr Samant, Dr Bhagwat, and others. They, Shri Pandit, and other people in the camp kept awake the whole night. The next day the missionary, Dr Evans, came from Vengurla with some nurses and medicines. But that night I found it impossible to go to Samarth Ashram and nurse the wounded volunteers. I was so exhausted that I could barely stand when I returned to the camp and had to lie down on my bed. The following day we were compelled to announce that the satyagraha was over.

It was in this situation that I received a very long letter from the imprisoned members of the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal. The gist was that in view of my praiseworthy achievement, they now appointed me the overall leader of the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal.

It was true that the atmosphere at Shirode had become turbulent and that I had tried to explain the perspective of satyagraha to the people ever since I went there. But it is very doubtful whether the effect of my advice on the common people would have lasted when the lathi charge started. When the villagers saw that the same satyagraha volunteers—whom they had helped respectfully by making space for them in the temple, etc.—were being reduced to corpses in front of their eyes, at least some of them would certainly have resorted to violence. If anyone managed this emergency, it was Pandit and his associates.

Thus, because the situation at Shirode was quite favourable, I was somehow able to carry on the satyagraha in accordance with Mahatma Gandhi's principles. But to let that go to my head and accept overall leadership of the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal would have been a dangerous venture. If one confronted Senapatis and Sardars everywhere, it would be a difficult situation indeed!

The history of Maharashtra, having received undue importance, was blended into the satyagraha movement. In many satyagraha camps and meetings in Maharashtra, ballads of Shivaji and Tanaji were being

sung, although their brave deeds had no real connection with satyagraha. The only consolation is that nobody thought of a scheme of sending iguanas up Sinhagad fort instead of attacking salt pans!<sup>6</sup> But starting a meeting by singing ballads of Shivaji and Tanaji, and expounding the importance of non-violent resistance at the same meeting, seemed inappropriate; nor did it have the desired effect on the audiences. But stopping the ballads would not have been possible. Naturally I saw the danger in accepting the leadership of the satyagraha in Maharashtra and humbly declined the position offered by the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal.

That I did the right thing became apparent in Shirode itself. I have already mentioned that the members of the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal and about thirty-five of their volunteers were incarcerated in the police post at the salt pan. They could not be sent to Ratnagiri because the prison there was full; and not a single bus was available in the nearby villages to send them to [the prison] at Belgaum. Actually there were many buses there, but the owners had removed the wheels and hidden them for fear that the police would commandeer them. Then Collector-saheb went to [the princely state of] Sawantwadi, brought three buses from the police officers there, and kept them within the Sawantwadi borders.

The Sawantwadi border was only a furlong from our camp, so the villagers heard the news immediately. They went to the bus drivers and inquired why the buses had been brought there. The drivers said that the buses had been brought to convey the police to Belgaum, because that is what the police officer in Sawantwadi had led them to believe. When the drivers found out that the buses had been brought to carry members of the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal and their volunteers to Belgaum, they said to the villagers, 'We shall remove the wheels of our buses, poke holes in the tyres, and run away. We don't even mind the damage.'

Two of the villagers brought this matter to me in the middle of the afternoon, insisting that I grant the bus drivers permission to do so. At

<sup>6</sup> As mentioned, Tanaji is said to have conquered Sinhagad by sending a large iguana up the steep cliff of the hill fort, and climbing up the rope ladder attached to its tail.

the time there were some eminent satyagrahi guests in the camp. They and Senapati Gokhale gathered together and started discussing the matter. I tried hard to reason with them, but most of them thought it proper to damage the buses. Only Shri Pandit sided with me, but he did not participate in the discussion. I said, 'The police officer at Sawantwadi or Collector-saheb may have brought the bus drivers here on a false pretext, but it is quite wrong to tell them to damage the buses and run away. You can see for yourselves how members of the Maharashtra Satyagraha Mandal and their volunteers are suffering from the summer weather and the heat from the salt. The water is drying up here, so there is a danger of cholera. Sawantwadi has plenty of water and clement weather. Is it not better to let them all go to Sawantwadi?' It was apparent that this reasoning had little effect. So I said, 'Don't ask the drivers just yet to damage the buses. Give me an hour, let me cross the border into Goa; then you can do what you think is right. As long as I'm here, you have to respect my word as the leader of the camp. When I'm gone, you are free to behave as you wish.' This ultimatum brought the group to its senses. The villagers went and convinced the bus drivers to carry the satyagrahi prisoners at least up to Sawantwadi; whether to continue onward or not was entirely up to them.

Thus the bus drivers took our prisoners to Sawantwadi. They refused to travel further, so these prisoners had to be kept at Sawantwadi for two weeks. They were not really under surveillance. They were kept in an empty police barrack and received food expenses from government officers. They kept up the morning and evening prayers, and were in good health because of the weather. For that duration, it became almost a satyagraha camp run at government expense!

After sending the satyagrahi prisoners to different places, the police entered Reddy village and made a slight show of strength. But the people remained calm and Collector-saheb withdrew the military police. Even so Reddy and Shirode were kept under punitive police surveillance, and a tax of Rs 1000 was levied. It proved difficult to collect it; only Rs 250 was collected. Just then the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed. Because the people of Reddy and Shirode had not resorted to violence during the satyagraha, the punitive police were withdrawn

according to the terms of the pact, and Rs 250 that had been collected was returned to the payers.

### 5. Imprisonment (1930-1931)<sup>7</sup>

[The leader of the Vile Parle camp was arrested in September 1930 and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Dharmanand was compelled to succeed him. The new ordinance of the Viceroy was announced on 10 October, and early the following morning, Dharmanand and all the volunteers were arrested. They were immediately brought to court and sentenced. Dharmanand was sentenced to a year of hard labour and a fine of Rs 200, or an additional three months in prison for non-payment of fine.]

At that time Shri Balasaheb Kher, Shri Shankarrao Deo, Swami Anand, and others were in Thane Jail. As a Class B prisoner, I too was kept in the same ward. This ward had been built for prisoners on their way to the Black Water [i.e. the cellular jail at Andaman]. The windows were very high, so that air did not circulate in the cell. The first night I was incarcerated, I felt breathless at about midnight. The following day the Jail Doctor kept me in hospital. After two days he sent me back to the cell and allowed me to sleep outside the cell. From that time onward until I was freed, I used to sleep outside. Even if I slept inside the cell when the cold weather set in, the door would not be closed. That is why my health remained all right, although the food was not particularly good.

The day after we were arrested [i.e. on 11 October 1930], Shri Nagindas Master, the chief of the Mumbai Congress Committee, was arrested at Pune under the same ordinance. The Bombay Bar Association appealed against this in the Bombay High Court. As a result Shri Master was set free; moreover, the High Court included in the same ruling the order that the hurried implementation of the ordinance was not lawful, and that the cases of those who had been arrested under the ordinance should be sent back to the High Court for a retrial.

<sup>7</sup> Sukhathankar, *Dharmanand*, pp. 219-20 ('Khulasa', chapter 11, *Prakash Saptahik*, 28 August 1938).

Accordingly our case went to the High Court. The Collector of Thane himself testified on behalf of the government. Even so the High Court found us not guilty and set us free. Our case had been decided before the Christmas vacation. When the High Court reconvened after the vacation, the cases of those arrested under the ordinance came up for retrial; and they were found not guilty and set free. Later on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1931, the Gandhi–Irwin Pact was signed, in accordance with which all the satyagrahi prisoners were set free!

## PART II

### Other Writings

### 3

## Extracts from Ashoka's Rock Edicts, 1909<sup>1</sup>

There is no need to impress upon anyone the significance of King Ashoka's rock edicts. These edicts have greatly facilitated our understanding of India's ancient history; and there is no better means to gauge the liberality and religiosity of King Ashoka. A number of scholars have written about these inscriptions in English, French, and German; but the topic has not been adequately discussed in the language of Maharashtra.

These edicts, carved on mountainsides and on stone pillars, have been written in the Pali language. There is very little difference between this Pali and the Pali of the *Tripitaka* texts. From Vedic Sanskrit emerged Pali, from Pali the Prakrit languages, and from Prakrit the present languages, such as Hindi, Bengali, and Marathi.

With the objective of presenting a specimen of the Pali of these rock edicts, I give here some selected extracts, along with Marathi translations.<sup>2</sup>

1. How Ashoka wearied of subjugating other countries [i.e. regions], how he turned to Buddhism, and how he conquered other nations by

<sup>1</sup> This is the translation of the article 'Ashokachya Shilalekhatil Veche' published in *Manoranjan*, Diwali Anka, 1909. The word '*shila-lekh*' literally means a 'rock/stone inscription'.

<sup>2</sup> The present English translations are made not from the Pali originals reproduced in the article, but from Dharmanand's Marathi translations.

propagating the Dhamma—and not with arms—will become clear to the readers from the following extract.

Eight years after his coronation, King Priyadarshi, Beloved of the Gods, conquered the country of Kalinga.<sup>3</sup> One and a half lakh persons were captured there, one lakh were killed, and more than this number died. Now, after having conquered the country of Kalinga, the Beloved of the Gods follows the Dhamma devoutly. His eager [interest] in the Dhamma has increased and he exerts himself to propagate it. The Beloved of the Gods feels remorse for having conquered the country of Kalinga (in this manner), because the Beloved of the Gods thinks that the killing, death, and capture of people at the time of conquering another nation are undoubtedly worth thinking over and are dreadful. The Beloved of the Gods thinks that even more dreadful than this is [the following occurrence]. There live (in these independent nations) men who possess excellent virtues, such as nurturing Brahmins, shramanas, sadhus of various other sects, or parents; serving gurus, helping friends, relatives, and others; treating dasas and servants well; and having firm faith. They suffer at such a time (while the country is being conquered); they are killed or forced to flee the place although they may prefer to stay there. Some of them are protected, (but still) suffer because they love their friends and relatives who are in danger. The Beloved of the Gods thinks that all this suffering which falls to the lot of these people is dreadful. It is not as if the Beloved of the Gods does not feel respect for any religious sect.

On that occasion, a number of people were killed, died, or were captured in the country of Kalinga; today the Beloved of the Gods thinks it is dreadful (that people should be killed, or captured, or should die) even to a hundredth or thousandth degree of that. The Beloved of the Gods thinks that even he who wrongs one should be forgiven. The Beloved of the Gods treats with compassion forest-dwellers [i.e. those living outside the borders of his realm], and tries to reform them. 'Feel ashamed of [committing] sinful acts! Do not get killed! Because the Beloved of the Gods has the desire that all creatures should be spared harm, all should exercise self-control, all should treat one another with a feeling of equality and should be pleasant in their behaviour towards others.'

<sup>3</sup> King Ashoka had assumed the title 'Priyadarshi, Beloved of the Gods' ['devanam priya Priyadarshi' in Sanskrit, 'devanam piya Piyadassi' in Pali].—D.K.

According to the Beloved of the Gods, the victory of propagating the Dhamma is the best victory, and the Beloved of the Gods has achieved such victory in his kingdom and the nearby kingdoms—in an area up to a distance of 600 yojanas<sup>4</sup>—where a Yavana (Greek) king named Antiyoḥ (Antiochos) lives, and beyond him where the four kings named Turmaye (Ptolemy), Antikin (Antigonos), Maga (Magas), and Aliksundar (Alexander) live; and below (in the south) up to Chodas [Cholas], Pandyas, and Tamraparni (Sinhala-dvipa); and in the kingdoms of the vassal kings in my empire . . . in all these places, people conduct themselves in accordance with the religious teaching of the Beloved of the Gods. Even where the messengers [or agents] of the Beloved of the Gods do not go, people hear about the conduct and teaching of the Beloved of the Gods in keeping with the Dhamma, conduct themselves accordingly, and will continue to do so.

And the victory achieved everywhere in this manner is filled with a feeling of love. The Beloved of the Gods thinks that this love, arising from the victory of the Dhamma, yields small results; but (it) will yield a large result in the next world.—Thirteenth Rock Edict.<sup>5</sup>

2. After the end of Ashoka's war with the country of Kalinga, described in the early part of the above extract, he felt remorse for having waged it. Then he tried to gain knowledge of the Dhamma, as seen from the following extract:

The Beloved of the Gods commands that more than two and a half years have passed since I became a lay follower (of the Buddha); but for a year I did not try hard. After a year I entered the (Buddhist) Sangha and exerted myself. During this time I was convinced that all the gods considered to be true in the whole of Jambu-dvipa [i.e. India] are false, along with their devotees. This is the fruit of [my] efforts. It cannot be obtained through wealth. Even a poor man can attain the greatest heavenly happiness if he tries. This matter is being made public so that poor and rich people should make such efforts. The people

<sup>4</sup> A yojana is a measure of distance computed variously at five or nine miles.

<sup>5</sup> There are fourteen major rock edicts of Ashoka, and they are found in four places. The Thirteenth Rock Edict found in Girnar, Kalsi, and Mansehra is badly damaged. The extract cited here is taken from the Shahbazgarhi Edict.—D.K.

*of the surrounding kingdoms should understand this, and this effort [of mine] should prove long-lasting.—Rock Edict of Siddhapur.*

3. After Ashoka became a devout Buddhist, as described in the above edict, he tried first to stop the killing of animals, as can be seen from the following edict:

*This religious edict has been caused to be inscribed by King Priyadarshi, Beloved of the Gods. No sacrifice should be performed by killing an animal, and no banquet should be held with meat and liquor [served] together. Because King Priyadarshi, Beloved of the Gods, thinks that such a banquet has many demerits. Formerly thousands of creatures were killed for meals every day in the kitchen of King Priyadarshi, Beloved of the Gods; but today, when this religious edict is written, only three creatures are killed for meals: two peacocks and a deer. The deer is not killed every day. Henceforth even these three creatures will not be killed.—The First Rock Edict.<sup>6</sup>*

4. Ashoka built hospitals for the welfare of men and animals, planted trees along roads, and dug wells.

*In the kingdom of King Priyadarshi, the Beloved of the Gods, as well as up to [the kingdoms of the] Cholas, Pandyas, Satiyaputra, Keralaputra, and Tamraparni (Sinhala-dvipa), in the kingdom of Antiyak (Antiochos) and in the kingdoms of the kings in his vicinity, King Priyadarshi, the Beloved of the Gods, has arranged for animals and men to get medicines in all places. In places where the [medicinal] plants useful for animals and men are not found, they have been brought from other places and planted. For the benefit of animals and men, wells have been dug along roads and trees planted.—Second Rock Edict.*

5. King Ashoka's command to his officers for the propagation of the Dhamma:

*King Priyadarshi, the Beloved of the Gods, says this: Twelve years after [my] coronation, I commanded that provincial officers, district officers, and*

<sup>6</sup> This and the extracts that follow are taken from the Girnar Rock Edicts.—D.K.

*officers under them should go on tours for this work, that is, to preach the Dhamma every five years, just as they go on tours for other work. (The religious teaching is as follows:) Serving [one's] parents is an act of religious merit. Helping friends, relatives, Brahmins, and shramanas is an act of religious merit. Not killing animals is an act of religious merit. Not squandering money and being content with a little is an act of religious merit.—Third Rock Edict.*

6. Ashoka appointed officers in charge of religious affairs.

*Formerly there were no officers known as Dharma-mahamatras [i.e. in charge of religious affairs]; I appointed them thirteen years after my coronation. With the objective that the Dhamma should be observed, the Dhamma should grow, and the welfare of religious people should be achieved, I have arranged for these Dharma-mahamatras to supervise sadhus of all religious sects. They have been appointed in the countries of Yona, Kamboja, Gandhara, Rashtrika, and Pethika. They are being appointed for the happiness of people like servants, Brahmins, the destitute and the aged, and in order to spare them trouble.—Fifth Rock Edict.*

7. Ashoka was ever alert in performing his duty, namely [to ensure] the welfare of all people.

*Formerly, deciding or hearing people's petitions at all times was not done. I have made the following arrangements to do this: I have appointed messengers with the intention that people's petitions should reach me (immediately) at all times and in all places—while eating, while in the inner [women's] quarter, while sleeping, while outside relieving myself, while listening to preaching, while in a garden. I decide petitions at all places . . . because I never think I have made enough efforts (for the welfare of the people). Achieving the welfare of all the people is my chief duty, and in order to achieve it, efforts and arrangements for people's petitions have to be made first. There is no deed more important than achieving the welfare of all creatures, and all my effort is directed toward freeing myself from the debt to all creatures. [I] try to make them happy in this world and help them to attain heaven in the next world.—Sixth Rock Edict.*

There are many other extracts worth citing. Rather, even citing entire rock edicts would not bore readers who possess intellectual curiosity; but this is not possible because of the constraint of space. It is hoped that this meagre attempt will arouse the intellectual curiosity of Maharashtra readers regarding Ashoka.

## 4

# The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, 1910<sup>1</sup>

## An Intimation [*Suchana*]

Shrimant Maharaj Shri Sayajirao Gaikwad had commanded me to deliver some lectures on Buddhism at Baroda. Accordingly I delivered altogether five lectures there last February, three of which are now being presented to readers. They are published by the generous patronage of Shrimant Maharaj himself. I am deeply grateful to Shrimant Maharaj-saheb for providing me with this excellent opportunity to present some information about Buddhism to Maharashtra readers.

My friend Dr Vasudev Anant Sukhtankar, PhD, read these lectures and made some useful suggestions, and also attached a Foreword, for which I am very grateful to him.

Pune, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1910

Dharmanand Kosambi

<sup>1</sup> The book *Buddha, Dharma ani Sangha* was published in Mumbai at the Nirayasagar Press in 1910 and a second edition was published in 1924. The third (and presently the only available) edition was published by the Dharmanand Kosambi Smarak Trust, Mumbai, in 1974. This last edition has unfortunately omitted the author's 'Intimation', Dr V.A. Sukhtankar's 'Foreword', and all the author's footnotes, besides introducing spelling mistakes and (unwarrantedly) changing the mention of the Buddha and respected monks from the honorific plural to the singular—although this last has no bearing on the English translation. The present translation has been checked with the first edition for accuracy, and the 'Intimation' and footnotes have been reinserted. A short table of contents has also been added. The footnotes that follow are the author's own, unless otherwise indicated—M.K.



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## 1. The Buddha

The Puranic [i.e. Hindu] texts regard Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva as the three principal deities. Christianity accords primary importance to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Similarly in Buddhism the triad of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha has pre-eminence. Many surmise that Buddhism, being older than the Puranic religion or Christianity, has been emulated by the Puranics and the Christians. I do not think that this surmise has any support beyond the similarity of number. Most of the audience are probably familiar with the 'Trimurti' of the Puranas and the Trinity in the Bible. But many of our brothers seem not to have properly appreciated the Three Gems of Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> Therefore I will attempt to present before you in this first lecture the first of the Three Gems, namely the Buddha, on the basis of the original text of the Buddhists, the *Tripitaka*.

There are two famous Sanskrit books, *Lalita-vistara* and Ashvaghosha's *Buddha-charita-kavya*, which provide information about the Buddha. In Pali the life of the Buddha has been narrated in the introduction to the *Jatakas*. Recent English books on the life of the Buddha

<sup>2</sup> This was not one of the three lectures, but was added later, as explained by the author in a later footnote.—M.K.

<sup>3</sup> The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha are known by the epithet 'Three Gems' in Buddhist literature.

have been written mostly on the basis of the above texts. These texts describe numerous marvels and improbable events in the Buddha's childhood. Initially, when European scholars read these, many of them surmised that the Buddha was not a historical person but a Puranic deity. The French scholar, Professor Senart, sought to prove that the concept of the Buddha as a deity was derived from sun worship. This theory did not last long.

Some years ago the Archaeological Survey dug up, with permission from the Nepali government, some buried ruins in the village of Lumbinidevi in the Nepali Terai. Among them was found a rock pillar of King Ashoka, on which appears a Pali inscription as follows:

*Twenty years after his coronation, Priyadarshi, the Beloved of the Gods (i.e. Ashoka), came here personally and offered worship because Shakyamuni Buddha was born here. (He) built a wall of stone pillars on all four sides and erected (this) stone pillar. The Lumbini village was exempted from tax because Lord Buddha was born here, and some revenue was assigned (to the vihara?).*<sup>4</sup>

This stone pillar convinced Western scholars that the Buddha was not a Puranic deity but a historical person; and Professor Senart's above-mentioned idea collapsed automatically! Even so, these scholars do not seem to have given a thought to matters such as what information can be garnered about the life of the Buddha from very ancient Pali texts—going beyond the three biographical texts mentioned above—and whether the marvels described in texts like *Lalita-vistara* have any basis in the original texts, although this is very important. Therefore I now intend to provide information about the life of the Buddha on the basis of the original Pali text, the *Tripitaka*.

About 600 BC there was a small oligarchy of Kshatriyas called Shakyas, in the city of Kapilavastu.<sup>5</sup> The oligarchs had the title of kings. Of

<sup>4</sup> All unmarked quotations are in Pali; Sanskrit or old Marathi quotations are clearly indicated.

<sup>5</sup> The heads of different Kshatriya clans were known as 'Mahajans' or Rajas. These kings gathered together at a town hall known as Santhaagaara to carry on the administration. They elected as the chief one among themselves and called him Maharaja. There were some similar oligarchies in North India. For additional information, see *Buddhist India* by Professor Rhys Davids.

these, a king named Shuddhodana had two wives, the first one named Mayadevi and the second Maha-prajapati; both were daughters of Anjana Shakya. When Mayadevi was travelling to her natal home for her delivery, she gave birth to a son in a forest named Lumbini on her way; this son later gained fame as the Buddha. It is said that he was named Siddhartha, but I have not come across this name in the *Tripitaka*, which is why I shall refer to him by the well-known name Bodhisattva, that is, the future Buddha. There is no basis in the *Tripitaka* for the strange marvels that are said to have occurred at the time of Bodhisattva's birth. Naturally, it seems highly probable that these were interpolated into the life of the Buddha later on.

King Shuddhodana took the new-born Bodhisattva and his mother home. There a sage named Asita foretold that the boy would be the saviour of the world; this story is found in the book *Sutta Nipata* in *Sutta Pitaka*.<sup>6</sup> That Mayadevi died on the seventh day after Bodhisattva's birth also has basis in the book *Chulla-vagga* in *Vinaya Pitaka*.

There is no mention of later developments, such as Bodhisattva's marriage, anywhere in the *Tripitaka*. However, the story of Rahul in the text *Maha-vagga* in *Vinaya Pitaka* shows that when Bodhisattva renounced his home at the age of twenty-nine and went to live in the forest, he had a son named Rahul.

The occasion of Bodhisattva's renouncing his home has been described in strange terms in books such as *Buddha-charita-kavya*: 'His father had built him three spacious palaces and he lived a life of luxury there without ever stepping out. Later he suddenly developed a desire for an outing. While he was driving about in his chariot with a charioteer named Chhanna, a deity appeared before him in the successive forms of an ailing man, an old man, and a dead man. Chhanna the charioteer explained to him the dreadful aspect of illness, old age, and death; and he developed a strong detachment from worldly life. Just then a deity appeared before him in the form of a monk, and the sight made him firmly resolve to renounce his home.'<sup>7</sup> Such incidents have been described in detail in recent books on the life of the Buddha

<sup>6</sup> A list of the books in the *Tripitaka* appears at the end of this book.—M.K.

<sup>7</sup> The act of Bodhisattva's renouncing his home [*griha-tyaga*] is known by the epithet '*Mahabhinishkramana*'.

and our audience is likely to be quite familiar with them. So there is no need to describe them at length here.

Now let us see whether we can find a basis for these in the *Tripitaka*. *Anguttara Nikaya* in *Sutta Pitaka* makes a mention of the three palaces for *Bodhisattva's* residence. Lord Buddha says, while telling some monks about his former stage in life:

O monks, I used to be very delicate. My father had constructed a pond and planted a variety of lotuses in them for my enjoyment. My clothing was made of silk. When I went out, my servants held a white parasol over me so as to protect me from the heat and the cold. I had three separate palaces for the winter, summer, and the rainy season. When I dwelt in the palace built for the rainy season, I would stay indoors for four months and pass my time listening to women singing and playing musical instruments. Other people give their *dasas* and servants inferior food, but the *dasas* and *dasīs* in my palace were served excellent rice cooked with meat.

While I thus enjoyed my wealth, a thought occurred to me that a common ignorant man, though liable himself to suffer from old age, feels distaste and contempt at the sight of an old man! But I myself am also liable to suffer from old age, and it would not become me to feel distaste and contempt for an old man as a common ignorant man does. This thought utterly destroyed my arrogance of youth.

A common ignorant man, though himself liable to suffer from illness, feels distaste and contempt to see an ailing man. But I myself am also liable to suffer from illness, and it would not become me to feel distaste and contempt for an ailing man as a common ignorant man does. This thought utterly destroyed my arrogance of health.

A common ignorant man, though himself liable to suffer death, feels distaste and contempt at the sight of a dead body. But I myself am also liable to die, and it would not become me to feel distaste and contempt for a dead body as a common ignorant man does. This thought utterly destroyed my arrogance of life.—*Anguttara Nikaya, Tika Nipata*

This extract shows that although Bodhisattva had three palaces to live in, King Shuddhodana had not incarcerated him in them, and had not kept him under the surveillance of dancing girls for fear that he would

renounce his home. He had available to him all the means of amusement with which the chief of a princely state provides his son today; even so, he was not content. The thought of the dreadful aspect of old age, illness, and death gradually took a deep root in his mind, and his arrogance stemming from youth, health, and life disappeared.

Lord Buddha has narrated the story of his renouncing his home, in the *Ariya-pariyesana-sutta* in *Majjhima Nikaya*, as follows:

O monks, while I was still in the stage of Bodhisattva before obtaining enlightenment, I too pursued things that were entrapped in the cycle of rebirth (such as sons, wife, male and female servants). (That is to say, I thought my happiness depended on them.) Even while being liable to old age, illness, death, and sorrow, I pursued things that were entrapped in old age, illness, death, and sorrow. Then a thought occurred to me that as I was bound by birth, old age, death, illness, and sorrow, it was not proper for me to pursue son, wife, and other [persons and] things that are also similarly bound. This being the case, observing the harm done by birth, old age, etc., it is right for me to go in search of the supreme state of Nirvana which is free of birth, old age, illness, death, and sorrow.

O monks, while thinking thus I left home after some time, having shaved my head, and donned ochre robes (i.e. became a sanyasi)—although I was young, with not a single grey hair, and was in the prime of my youth, and although my parents refused me permission and wept so much all the time that their tears drenched their faces (I disregarded all that).<sup>8</sup>

Having thus renounced home, Bodhisattva went to the city of Rajagriha which was then ruled by a king named Bimbisara. He saw Bodhisattva going around begging for food. He thought him to be some extraordinary being and went personally to the hill named

<sup>8</sup> This is not a literal translation of the passage. I have omitted repetitions and attempted to give the gist. The reference here is to 'parents'. Bodhisattva's mother had died on the seventh day after his birth; however, after her death Maha-prajapati nurtured Bodhisattva like her own son, as mentioned in *Chulla-vagga*. Maha-prajapati was Bodhisattva's maternal aunt as well as step-mother, as mentioned above; obviously therefore she is the one referred to as his mother here.

Pandava where Bodhisattva lived. There he met Bodhisattva, and entreated him to give up renunciation and return to his Kshatriya status. But he was ineffectual because of Bodhisattva's firm resolve to obtain Nirvana. This story is recounted in the *Pabbajja-sutta* in *Sutta Nipata*.

A later account of Bodhisattva is found in *Maha-sachchaka-sutta* in *Majjhima Nikaya*. Let me give its gist rather than a word-for-word translation. There lived a Jain (Nirgrantha) pandit named Sachchaka in the city of Vaishali. He was also known as Aggivessana. The Buddha says to him:

O Aggivessana, I thus left home after being initiated [into renunciation]. I was searching for the greatest happiness. I was wandering about in quest of the supreme state of peace. At that time I approached Alara Kalama [Aalaara Kaalaama] and said, 'O Kalama, I wish to enter your religious sect.' Then Kalama said, 'O long-lived one, follow this doctrine. A learned man who follows this doctrine would soon be able to comprehend our philosophy.'

Soon I learned Alara Kalama's philosophy. I became adept at disputation; but it was mere parroting. Other disciples of Kalama were also expert in such parroting. This parroting did not satisfy me. I thought to myself that Kalama could not have obtained this knowledge on the strength of faith alone; he must surely have had a complete experience of this philosophy. Then I went to Kalama and asked, 'O Kalama, how was this philosophy revealed to you?' Then Kalama taught me the samadhi known as Akinchanyaayatana.<sup>9</sup> Then I thought to myself that I had the same faith that Kalama had, I had the same energy that Kalama had, I had the same power of discrimination that Kalama had, I had the same power of concentration (samadhi) that he had, the same true wisdom [*pradnya, pradnyaa*] that he had. Why then should I not have this doctrine revealed to me as Alara Kalama did?

With this thought, O Aggivessana, I mastered Akinchanyaayatana samadhi in a short time. When I conveyed this news to Kalama, he said to me, 'You have experienced the same samadhi as I have, and you have comprehended what I have. Your status and mine are now equal.'

<sup>9</sup> This samadhi frees the mind from all propensities. [It is the seventh step of samadhi. See D. Kosambi, *Parshwanathacha Chaturyama Dharma*, p. 24.—M.K.]

Therefore, let us henceforth lead this sect together and teach our disciples.' Thus Kalama showed me great respect. Although he was the teacher and I the disciple, he raised me to his own status. O Aggivessana, this greatness did not satisfy me. I began to think that this doctrine of Kalama would not help me to obtain Nirvana and that his reach extended only up to the Akinchanyaayatana samadhi; and I left Kalama's sect.

After that I went to Uddaka Ramaputta [Udraka Ramaputra in Sanskrit]. He taught me a samadhi known as Naiva-sandhyaana-sandhyaanaayatana.<sup>10</sup> I mastered it in a very short time. When I conveyed this news to Ramaputta, he too honoured me as Kalama had done. Although he was the teacher and I the disciple, he raised me to his own status. But that alone did not satisfy me. I began to think that this doctrine of Ramaputta would not help me to attain Nirvana and that his reach extended only up to the Naiva-sandhyaana-sandhyaanaayatana samadhi; and I left Ramaputta to move on.

O Aggivessana, as I wandered thus in the region [literally, country] of Magadha in search of supreme happiness, supreme peace, and Nirvana, I reached Uruvela [Uruvelaa]. This region was very beautiful, the woods were scenic, the river flowed slowly on. In the surrounding area, some villages had been settled at a distance. At this spot, O Aggivessana, I would [do the exercise of] holding my breath. This would cause terrible pains in my head and my stomach, and my whole body would burn. But my enthusiasm was firm and my alertness persisted, though my body had become weak. Even the terrible pains did not affect my mind.

Subsequently I decided to reduce my diet. I would subsist on a decoction of lentils. This emaciated my body; my hands and feet were like sticks, and my spine was clearly visible. My ribs became brittle like the beams of a dilapidated house, and my eyeballs were sunken like the deep reflection of constellations in water. My skin was burnt like a raw gourd that withers when cut and left out in the sun, and my stomach touched my back. At this time a thought occurred to me that I was experiencing the kind of terrible pains that no other *śramana* or Brahmin could have surpassed. But I did not think that such difficult acts would lead to any extraordinary knowledge of religion. Was there

<sup>10</sup> This samadhi is the last [or the eighth] step.

no other path to the attainment of Nirvana? I remembered the samadhi of my first meditation under a *jambhul* tree when I had gone to the fields with my father (before leaving home); could that perhaps be the path to Nirvana?<sup>11</sup> As soon as I remembered this incident, O Aggivessana, I started thinking that that was the true path. I said to myself, 'Why do I fear the happiness of that samadhi? It is not happiness obtained through luxury, nor is it sinful. I should not fear such happiness. But I would not be able to attain it with this weakened body. Therefore I should eat enough to sustain the body.'

Thereupon I started partaking of sufficient food to sustain the body. At the time there were five monks who served me. They hoped that I would share with them the knowledge of religion that I obtained. But when I started partaking of food again, they were disappointed and left me, thinking me to be a hypocrite. The food gradually brought back my strength and I began to experience the happiness of samadhi.

Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta were the leaders of a type of Yoga-marga.<sup>12</sup> *Buddha-charita-kavya* describes them as proponents of the Sankhya doctrine, which has led many Western scholars to claim that Buddhism originated in the Sankhya doctrine. But this statement has no basis anywhere in the *Tripitaka*. It only proves that Acharya Ashvaghosha has made them into proponents of the Sankhya doctrine in order to demonstrate the ineffectualness of that doctrine and to enhance the beauty of his poem.

The next terrible calamity to befall Bodhisattva was his battle with Mara. A description of this event, full of fantasy, is found in books like

<sup>11</sup> [*Jambhul* is a fruit tree: *Calyptanthus caryophyllifolia* or jambolana.—M.K.]

<sup>12</sup> The Yoga school is one of the six chief 'orthodox' schools of Indian philosophy, i.e. it accepts the authority of the Vedas. Central to this system is the practice of meditation. Yoga is closely allied to the Sankhya [Saankhya] school which is also orthodox, and accepts the latter's epistemology and metaphysics with its 25 principles, but also admits the existence of God (and is therefore sometimes called 'theistic Sankhya'). The Sankhya school posits the duality between spirit and matter, and prescribes meditation to attain the state of liberation or freedom from suffering in this very life, as well as after death. Chatterjee and Datta, *Indian Philosophy*.—M.K.

*Buddha-charita-kavya*. It is very attractive from the point of view of poetry, but the description of the battle against Mara found in *Padhana-sutta* in *Sutta Nipata* is different. *Padhana Sutta* has twenty-five verses, and it may not be out of place to cite some of them here.

Lord Buddha says:

(1) *I sat on the bank of the river Nairanjara, meditating with great enthusiasm for the attainment of Nirvana. My mind was concentrated totally on Nirvana.* (2) *[At that time] Mara approached me and said to me in a compassionate tone, 'You have become emaciated. Your complexion is pale. Death is near.'* (3) *You are most certain to die. There is a slender chance of your surviving. [Literally, your death is guaranteed by a thousand degrees; only one degree of life remains in you.] O (Gautama), stay alive. You can do meritorious deeds if you live.* (4) *One can accumulate a large amount of religious merit by doing acts (appropriate to the religious duties of a householder) like keeping the sacred fire and making a fire sacrifice. Why then do you want Nirvana?'*

When Mara counselled him thus, Bodhisattva said to him:

(1) *I do not want even an iota of such (worldly) religious merit. Let Mara offer this counsel to those who need it, if he wishes.* (2) *I possess faith, enthusiasm, and true wisdom. When I have all this, and when my mind is thus firm, why do you threaten me with death?*

Bodhisattva said further:

(1-2) *(O Mara), your first army consists of objects of enjoyment that please the senses. Lack of interest (boredom) is your second army, the third is thirst and hunger, the fourth sensual desire, fifth sloth, sixth fear, seventh doubt, and your eighth army is pride.* (3) *(In addition,) your (ninth) army is gain, honour, and worship. Fame gained by false means (is the tenth) which leads a man to praise himself and criticize others.* (4) *O dark black Namuchi (i.e. Mara), your armies attack (sadhus and saints); they cannot be defeated by a coward. But a brave man who conquers them attains happiness.*

Bodhisattva says still further:

(1) *(O Mara,) all these shramanas and Brahmins have been cowed down by your army, which is why they do not shine (with virtues like good character)*

*and do not know the path taken by great sages. (2) Neither god nor man can withstand your army. I vanquish it with my true wisdom, like breaking a pot of unbaked clay with a stone.*

It is not necessary to explain here who this Mara is. Mara is the one who kills; he destroys man's good desires with the help of the army described above. To triumph over him is to triumph over oneself. This victory is many times superior to victory won over an external enemy.

Bodhisattva thus struggled constantly with Mara. Later, on the day of Vaishakh Pournima, he partook of a sweet dish of milk offered by a woman from a respectable family, Sujata by name, and sat under the Bodhi (i.e. peepul) tree. That night he utterly defeated Mara and discovered the religious path that would save the world.

Then Mara said:

*For seven years I constantly pursued the Lord, but I could find no weak point in this Enlightened One who has powers of discrimination.' While he was thus overcome by grief, his lute fell down from under his arm. Then Mara became extremely unhappy and vanished on the spot!*

After defeating Mara and discovering the religious path, Bodhisattva became the Buddha. From this juncture onward, he is described by various epithets, such as Sambuddha [one who is perfectly enlightened], Tathagata,<sup>13</sup> Sugata [one who has gone by the good path], Dharmaraj [Lord of the Dhamma], Marajit [the vanquisher of Mara], and Jina [one who has obtained the ultimate knowledge]. He discovered this path at the age of thirty-six. Further events are narrated in the text *Mahavagga*. This text has been translated into English, therefore those who know English are requested to read it.<sup>14</sup> It is not possible to give here the detailed description given in *Mahavagga*, but I cannot help mentioning some of those details.

After attaining enlightenment, Lord Buddha remained at the same spot for seven days, experiencing to the fullest the essence of salvation. Towards the end of the seventh night, he uttered the happy words:

<sup>13</sup> 'Tathagata', an epithet the Buddha frequently applied to himself, has several possible meanings, including 'the one who has reached the ultimate stage [of enlightenment]'.—M.K.

<sup>14</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, vols XIII and XVII.

*When a Brahmin, filled with enthusiasm and sitting in meditation, has the knowledge of religion revealed to him, he utterly destroys the army of Mara, and shines like the sun in the sky.*<sup>15</sup>

Later, while the Lord lived in the region on the bank of the Nairanjara, a thought occurred to him:

*(1) With great effort have I obtained the knowledge of this Path. There is no point in sharing it with people, because people who are filled with greed and hatred would not be able to comprehend it. (2) This Path goes against the current of worldly life, it is a path of knowledge, it is profound, it is difficult to follow, and it is subtle. (Therefore) a man covered in ignorance and attached to sexual passion would not understand it.*

Brahmadev apprehended this thought in the Lord's mind and said to himself, 'Alas! If the Buddha does not preach the Dhamma, it will be a great loss to the people! They will be destroyed!' Uttering these words, Brahmadev suddenly manifested himself before the Buddha and said to him,

*Arise O brave one, O caravan-leader; you have won the terrible war. You are now free from debt. Wander everywhere. O Lord, preach the Dhamma to the people. There are bound to be (some) who understand your Dhamma.*

Acceding to this request from Brahmadev, the Buddha resolved to preach his Dhamma.

Now it is somewhat difficult to understand who this Brahmadev is, from the above extract or from the story in *Mahavagga*. But one gets a clear idea from his description in the suttas such as *Tevijja-sutta* and *Mahagovinda-sutta*.

The four emotions of friendship, compassion, joy, and indifference are called 'Brahma-vihar'.<sup>16</sup> *Karaniyetta-sutta* says:

<sup>15</sup> A 'Brahmin' here means one who has driven out his impurities.

<sup>16</sup> Friendship [*maitri*] means universal love, compassion [*karuna*] means pity, joy [*mudita*] means a happy frame of mind, and indifference [*upeksa*] is disregard of everything.

*Just as a mother nurtures her only son at the risk of her life, so should (one) fill one's mind with boundless love for all living creatures.*

*And one should harbour boundless friendship in one's mind and fill the four directions as well as the upward and downward direction with love. There should be no impediment to this love; it should have no enemy and no step-child.*

*While standing, walking, sitting, or lying down in bed before one falls asleep, one should keep this feeling of friendship active, because this is called 'Brahma-vihar' (by the learned).*

This will show that Brahmadev means one of the emotions of friendship, compassion, cheerfulness, or indifference. A mother nurtures with friendship (i.e. love) her son whom she breast-feeds; nurses him with compassion if he falls ill; caresses him joyfully later when he achieves success in his studies; and is indifferent to him when he subsequently sets up his own household or behaves contrary to her wishes—but never hates him, and never refuses to help him. Similarly, great men are filled with these four states of mind and are ready to achieve the welfare of the general public. Brahmadev, whom people call the Great Father, is nothing but a manifestation of these four states of mind. What does it mean that Brahmadev approached the Buddha? It means that these four states developed in his mind. What does it mean that he acceded to Brahmadev's request? It means that the limitless love, profound compassion, joyousness towards good men, and indifference—towards those who would not listen to him or would become his enemies for no reason—which dwelt in his mind prompted him to propagate the good Dhamma.

The Buddha thought that he should preach the Dhamma first of all to Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta, because they were both capable of understanding it. But he heard that they had just passed away. Then he resolved to preach it first to the five monks who had helped him during the time of his self-mortification, as described above. These monks lived at the time in Rishi-pattana at Varanasi. Lord Buddha reached there about the time of Ashadha Pournima. When they saw him, the five monks said to one another, 'This hypocritical *shramana* is coming here, this fallen Gautam is approaching.

We should not show him any respect. We should only place a seat here; let him sit on it if he wishes.'

But as the Buddha drew near, the resolve of the five monks began to break down. One of them got up and placed a seat for him, another got water ready to wash his feet. The rest came forward, took his begging bowl and monk's robe, and honoured him. The Buddha told them that the true Dhamma had been revealed to him, but they did not believe him. Finally, the Buddha preached to them on the day of Ashadha Pournima, as follows:

O monks, a renunciant should not adopt the two extremes. Which are these two extremes? One extreme is to enjoy luxury. It is lowly and uncivilized, it is adopted by ignorant people, it is ignoble, and leads to disaster. The other extreme is mortification of the body. This also is full of suffering, ignoble, and leads to disaster. That is why Tathagata has discovered the Middle Path which avoids these two extremes. This Path gives one the eye of knowledge and augments knowledge. This Path alone leads to tranquillity, divine power, perfect enlightenment, and Nirvana. O monks, if you ask me which Path this is, [I answer that] it is the Noble Eight-fold Path. These are its eight elements: Right Vision, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Living, Right Effort, Right Thought, and Right Samadhi. This is the Path discovered by Tathagata, which leads to the attainment of tranquillity, divine power, enlightenment, and Nirvana.<sup>17</sup>

O monks, the first Noble Truth is 'Suffering'. Birth is full of suffering as are old age, illness, and death. The company of those one dislikes is full of suffering as is parting with those who are dear; one suffers also if one does not obtain what one desires. In sum, these five factors of Clinging to Existence [*upaadaan-skandha* in Sanskrit] are full of suffering.

O monks, the second Noble Truth is the 'Origin of Suffering', that is, Craving [*trishna*, literally thirst, i.e. 'thirsting after'] which arises again and again, and which creates attachment—to sensual pleasure (or worldly happiness), to existence (or a desire for heaven, etc.), and to non-existence (or a desire to vanish into nothingness).

O Monks, the third Noble Truth is called 'Extinction of Suffering', which means eradicating this Craving with total renunciation,

abandoning it, discarding it, liberating oneself from it, and preventing it.

O monks, the fourth Noble Truth is the 'Path to the Extinction of Suffering'. This is the Noble Eight-fold Path (mentioned above).

This first sermon by the Buddha is called 'Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma' [Dhamma-chakka-pavattana]. Of the five monks, the one named Kaundinya accepted the Buddha's preaching right at that time and became the Buddha's disciple. The other four also became the Buddha's disciples later.

Gentlemen, during the forty-five years from this point onward until his Pari-nirvana (death) at Kushinara,<sup>18</sup> the Buddha did numerous benevolent deeds. But I have no time left to describe them even in brief. I do intend to present a little information about the Sangha he established, in another lecture. Now I will finish after giving a little information about his daily routine.

Lord Buddha would rise at dawn and meditate or walk back and forth quietly outside the vihara. In the morning he would go into the village [or town] to beg for food. He would answer any question that anyone asked, then preach to him and lead him on the right path. It was on such occasions that he preached and led on the right path Krishi, Bharadwaj, Shrigala, and others. He would return to the vihara with the begging bowl in which the cooked food given as alms had got mixed up, and had his meal before noon. After eating he would rest a little and then meditate. In the evening he would preach to householders or monks. Late in the evening he would meditate again or walk back and forth. At about midnight he would go to sleep, lying on his right side, placing one foot upon the other, and using his hand as a pillow. This sleeping position is known as the sleeping position of a lion. When he travelled, he was usually accompanied by a large group of monks. He would eat begged food in one village and go to the next for his night halt. In a place which had no vihara, he would live under a tree or in a park. If he was invited a day in advance, he would have his food at that person's house, along with his group of monks.

After thus showering the populace with the nectar of his Dhamma unceasingly for forty-five years, Lord Buddha attained Parinirvana at

<sup>17</sup> For an explanation, see Appendix II.

<sup>18</sup> This place is in Gorakhpur District.

Kushinara at the age of eighty. Although born in a Kshatriya family, he regarded victory over the mind as superior to victory over other countries. He conquered his foes not with weapons, but with measures such as faith, peace, and unbounded enthusiasm for the welfare of the people. What can a man not conquer if he has conquered Mara?

Gentlemen, this Gem, the Buddha, arose in this Bharat-bhumi, which is its great good fortune! It is not necessary to tell you what changes this Gem brought about in world history. We had quite forgotten during the last millennium this Great Teacher, this Teacher of the World—this 'true god', to use Tukaram-buva's words.<sup>19</sup> But the exertions of Western scholars have gradually enabled us to appreciate this Gem, which should be considered a good sign. I hope that the brilliant light of this Gem would shine onto our minds and eradicate our ignorance, that we will forget our differences and be able once again to achieve the welfare of mankind. In the end let me pray, through the words of the Venerable Acharya Aniruddha:

*May the Perfectly Enlightened One—who comprehended the past, present, and future philosophies of religion under the great Bodhi Tree and who never experienced a clouding of his intellect when these philosophies emerged in his heart—lead to your welfare! [Skt]*

## 2. The Dhamma

*The Dhamma is light in darkness, a gem which destroys the poison that is calamity; it offers a helping hand to the fallen; it is a kalpa-taru which grants the desired fruit; it is a chariot that conquers the world; it is sustenance on the journey to the next world, the most potent medicine for the ailment of suffering, reassurance to a mind confused by the fear of worldly life; it is like a thicket of [cooling] sandalwood trees when one is suffering from heat; it is a permanent friend, and a true brother of the good.—Avadana-kalpalata of Kshemendra-mahākavi. [Skt]*

<sup>19</sup> 'There is no alternative to a Sadguru [good teacher], one must fall at his feet first of all. In no time at all would he make one like himself [i.e. endow one with the same knowledge that he possesses]. [Even] the simile of iron and the philosopher's stone is inadequate, so unfathomable is the greatness of a Sadguru. [But] so blind are the people, says Tuka, that they have forgotten the true god!'

*The teaching of the Buddha is to abstain from all sin, to accumulate all religious merit, and to conquer one's own mind.—Dhammapada*

This verse [from *Dhammapada*] contains the gist of the Religious Path preached by the Buddha. 'To abstain from all sin' is to guard one's moral character (*shila*), 'to accumulate religious merit' means to achieve samadhi, and 'to conquer one's mind' means attaining true wisdom [*pradnya*]. Morality, samadhi, and true wisdom are undoubtedly the three main steps on this Religious Path, known respectively as the Disciplines [*shiksha*] of Morality, Meditation, and True Wisdom [*Adhi-shila, Adhi-chitta, and Adhi-pradnya*]. These three Disciplines contain within themselves all eight elements of the Noble Eight-fold Path described above. Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Living are subsumed under the Discipline of Morality; Right Effort, Right Thought, and Right Samadhi are contained within the Discipline of Meditation; and Right Vision and Right Resolve are subsumed under the Discipline of True Wisdom.

Through this triad of Disciplines, I will describe in this lecture the Dhamma, the second of the three Gems—the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.

## *The Discipline of Morality*

Let us first consider the Discipline of Morality. Buddhist society has four categories of men: householder, lay follower, *shramaner*, and monk [*bhikshu*], and four corresponding categories of women: housewife, lay follower, *shramaneri*, and nun [*bhikshuni*]. Of these the last two are not in existence today; the remaining six are found among the Buddhists of countries like Burma and Ceylon. I do not think it necessary to consider the portion applicable to monks and *shramaners*—first, because that would expand today's topic too much; and second, it would not yield any particular advantage. However, those who are interested are requested to read the translation of the text of *Vinaya* published in the *Sacred Books of the East*.

The rules of Morality applicable to householders and housewives are divided—as are those applicable to the other categories—into two parts: conduct to be followed and conduct to be avoided, that



is, the things the Buddha has recommended and the things he has prohibited.

In suttas such as *Mangala-sutta* and *Sigala-sutta*, Lord Buddha has made certain recommendations to be observed by householders and housewives. Of these, I cite below verses from *Mangala-sutta* in order to clarify the Recommended Conduct [Vihita-shila].

A certain deity said to the Buddha:

*Many gods and men have formed numerous ideas of the nature of what is auspicious [mangala]. O Lord, tell us what is most auspicious.*

Thereupon the Lord said:

*To avoid the company of fools, seek the company of learned men, and honour those who are worth honouring are the most auspicious things.*

*To live in a good country [i.e. region], to have an accumulation of religious merit, and to place the mind firmly on the right path are the most auspicious things.*

*To obtain proficiency in understanding the truth, in the arts, in discipline, be well learned, and to say what is appropriate to the occasion are the most auspicious things.*

*To serve one's parents, to maintain one's wife and children well, and to do work properly are the most auspicious things.*

*To give alms and charity, to conduct oneself in accordance with religion, to be benevolent towards relatives, and to engage in acceptable acts are the most auspicious things.*

*To weary of sin and dissociate oneself from it, to observe self-control with regard to drinking, and to be alert in the performance of meritorious deeds are the most auspicious things.*

*To acclaim the good, to be humble, contented, grateful, and to listen to religious discourses from time to time are the most auspicious things.*

*To endure, to talk sweetly, to meet shramanas, and to frequently discuss religious topics are the most auspicious things.*

*Devout effort, celibacy, comprehending the Four Noble Truths, and experiencing Nirvana are the most auspicious things.*

*If a person's mind remains untroubled, unaffected by sorrow, pure, and secure even when he comes into contact with people experiencing various*

*states of mind (these being eight, namely, gain and loss, success and failure, censure and praise, happiness and unhappiness), this action of his is the most auspicious thing.*

*There are those who observe all these auspicious things and attain happiness without ever suffering defeat—this act of theirs is the most auspicious thing.*

This sutta contains a large portion of the Recommended Conduct. Many of the auspicious things described here are referred to as the Dhamma by King Ashoka in his rock edicts. In the Ninth Rock Edict he says:

*People observe auspicious things with great ceremony during weddings, on the birth of a son, while starting on a journey, and on other such occasions. But that is meaningless. Such auspicious things yield a small benefit. But the auspicious thing that yields a great benefit is Religion. (Which is that?) Treating dasas and servants well is good, serving ones' teachers is good, controlling oneself with regard to killing living creatures is good, to give alms to Brahmins and shramanas is good.*

*Sigala-sutta* describes the mutual duties of husband and wife, parent and son, teacher and student, master and servant, etc. Kindly make a point of seeing the Marathi translation of *Sigala-sutta*.<sup>20</sup>

The Prohibited Conduct starts with the five rules to be observed by householders and housewives: (1) Not to kill, (2) Not to steal, (3) Not to commit adultery, (4) Not to lie, (5) Not to imbibe intoxicants such as liquor. These five acts are to be avoided by those who call themselves Buddhists.

The eighth days of both fortnights, *pournima*, and the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight—these four days are called *uposatha* days [or holy days]. The householders and housewives who spend these days in thinking upon Religion are known respectively as *upasakas* and *upasikas* [or *upasikaas*, i.e. male and female lay followers.] The Buddha has laid down eight rules for male and female lay followers to observe on these four days, which are also subsumed under Prohibited Conduct. They are as follows: (1) Not to kill, (2) Not to steal, (3) Not

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix I.

to violate celibacy (i.e. to observe celibacy), (4) Not to tell lies, (5) Not to imbibe intoxicants such as liquor, (6) Not to eat after midday, (7) Not to watch dance, music, and other programmes that arouse sensual passion and not to wear garlands, fragrant pastes and such other (luxurious) things, (8) Not to sleep on a high and large bed.

Of these, the first, second, fourth, and fifth rules are included in the Five Rules mentioned earlier. The third of the Five Rules is an injunction not to commit adultery; but the third rule here requires celibacy to be observed on the day of *uposatha*. If a householder or housewife is unable to observe *uposatha* on the four above-mentioned days, they may do so on any other day. In Burma today, the men who are unable to observe *uposatha* on the four prescribed days because of office work, etc. do so on Sundays.

The main element in prohibited conduct is to give up the ten sins related to the body, speech, and mind. These ten sins, known as the Path of Ten Unmeritorious Actions [*dasa-akusal-kamma-patha* in Pali], are as follows. The three bodily sins are: destruction of life, stealing, and adultery. The four sins related to speech are: telling lies, slander, harsh speech, and senseless talk. The three mental sins are: covetousness, anger, and heterodoxy. Here, heterodoxy means the views that benevolence is meaningless, good conduct is meaningless, samadhi yields no advantage, etc. The rest is evident. Whosoever wishes to bring his conduct to perfection ought to give up these ten sins. These ten sins find a mention in chapter 12 of the *Manusmriti*, as follows:

*Coveting another's wealth, wishing another ill, and holding heterodox views—these three are to be understood as (sinful) acts related to the mind.*

*Harsh words, telling lies, slander of all kinds, and senseless speech—these four are (sinful) acts related to speech.*

*Stealing, violence that is not approved by the Vedas, and adultery—these three are (sinful) bodily acts. [Skt]*

Manu has said here that violence acceptable to the Vedas is not sinful. The Buddhists would not approve of this distinction. According to the Buddhists, all violence, whether acceptable to the Vedas or not, is the same. Except for this difference of opinion, the original *Smriti*

writers are seen to have accepted the Buddhist view in its entirety.<sup>21</sup> At present there is hardly any violence acceptable to the Vedas. A fire sacrifice may be performed once in twenty or twenty-five years. The animal sacrifice on occasions such as Kali-puja, Dasara, etc. cannot be termed 'acceptable to the Vedas'. Therefore, if an orthodox Hindu were to resolve to totally avoid the above ten sins, the *Smritis* would not impede him; moreover, he would find strong support in the above-cited extract from the *Manusmriti*.

Ayurveda also supports the avoidance of these ten sins. Vagbhat says in chapter 2 of *Ashtaanga-hridaya Sanhita*:

*There is no happiness without religion, which is why one should be religious. One should faithfully serve the good, and keep away from the wicked.*

*Violence, theft, adultery, slander, harsh speech, telling lies, senseless speech, anger, covetousness, and heterodoxy—these ten sins should be discarded in connection with the body, speech, and mind. [Skt]*

Although Vagbhat was a Buddhist, he has not advised abandoning these ten sins only to induce people to follow Buddhism. He maintains that avoiding these ten sins is essential for good health.

The avoidance of these ten sins is known in Pali as 'the moral duty of man' [*manushya-dharma* in Sanskrit]. This, together with the above two extracts, shows that in ancient times the avoidance of these ten sins was generally acceptable in this country; it was generally considered to be essential for citizenship. Therefore, Gentlemen, why should one not teach the younger generation this avoidance of the ten sins—which is acceptable to the adherents of all religious sects—by word and deed?

I have thus presented before you in brief the general aspect of the Prohibited Conduct. Both Recommended Conduct and Prohibited Conduct are classified further into three categories each: inferior, medium, and superior. The inferior conduct is that which is prompted by a desire for fame, the medium conduct is that which is prompted by a desire for religious merit, and the superior conduct is that which is prompted by a feeling of duty. The conduct which can be used for

<sup>21</sup> Recent scholars have dated the *Manusmriti* to the fourth century BC. See Dr Bhandarkar's essay, 'A Peep into the Early History of India', p. 46.

praising oneself and censuring others—'I am of good conduct, these others are of bad conduct and sinful'—is inferior. The conduct which cannot be thus used but which does not lead to higher knowledge is medium. And the conduct which is supported by true wisdom is superior. Conduct prompted by desire for happiness in the next life is inferior; conduct prompted by a desire for salvation is medium; and conduct prompted by a desire for the welfare of all creatures is superior.

Conduct is further classified into four types: that which is harmful, that which preserves the existing situation, that which leads to distinct progress, and that which shares the quality of penetration.

*The conduct of an ignorant person is harmful when he keeps company with sinners, does not keep company with those of good conduct, does not mind violating rules, has frequent sinful thoughts in his mind, and does not guard his faculties.*

*The conduct that preserves the existing situation is that of a monk who is happy with his wealth of good conduct, does not give a thought to attaining meditation and samadhi, and who gives up further attempts, being satisfied with his conduct.*

*The conduct of a monk who is endowed with good conduct and seeks to attain samadhi leads to distinct progress.*

*The conduct of a monk, who is not content with his good conduct alone and who constantly seeks renunciation, shares the quality of penetration.*

These four types refer to monks, but apply also to householders and housewives. The reason to narrate these and the three earlier categories is that we should not allow our conduct to be inferior or lead to harm, but should try to raise it to an ever higher level.

### *The Discipline of Concentration or Samadhi*

After attaining Good Conduct one should try to attain the Discipline of Samadhi. Samadhi cannot be attained without accumulating a wealth of good conduct. Lord Buddha has said:

*O monks, if any monk desires to gain the four meditations which give direct happiness—to the fullest extent, with ease, and at any time—he should meticulously observe good conduct.—Akāṅkheyya-sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

Samadhi means concentration of the mind. It is divided into unmeritorious (*akushala*) and meritorious (*kushala*). When a play is being performed in a playhouse, some spectators listen with rapt attention to songs replete with eroticism. Their mental concentration on this occasion is unmeritorious. Similarly, when a man is engrossed in harming another, the temporary concentration of his mind is regarded as unmeritorious. Naturally, unmeritorious concentration is not counted in the Discipline of Samadhi, only meritorious concentration is.

Meritorious concentration is distinguished into finding access to samadhi [*upachara samadhi*] and retention of samadhi [*arpana samadhi*]. The former is short-lived. A small child that is learning to stand up cannot stand for a long time. Similarly a yogi cannot sustain his samadhi for a long time in the beginning. The latter samadhi lasts long; it can be attained after the former has been attained, and can, with practice, last as long as one wants. It is divided into four types by level: reflection, thought, love, happiness, and concentration are the elements of the first level of meditation. In the second level of meditation, reflection and thought do not remain, only the remaining three elements do. In the third level of meditation, love also disappears, and only happiness and concentration remain. In the fourth level of meditation, only concentration and tranquillity remain. Tranquillity is present also in the other levels of meditation, but it is accentuated in the fourth level of meditation; that is why it is counted as an element of the fourth level of meditation.

Meritorious samadhi can be attained by thinking upon forty objects of meditation known as *karma-sathanas*. If I describe them all, this book would turn into a tome. Therefore I will mention only four by way of illustration.

#### (1) Awareness of the Body [*Kaayagataa Smriti*]

The text *Vishuddhi-marga* describes six types of the average man, of which the three chief ones are: the one characterized by passion, that is, one in whom sensual desires are more dominant than other propensities; one characterized by hatred, that is one in whom hatred is dominant; and the one characterized by lethargy, or one in whom sloth is dominant.

For the man characterized by passion, the recommended object for meditation in the beginning is Awareness of the Body, that is, observing one's body with alertness. A person who wishes to study this should accustom himself to looking upon the different substances in his body with a feeling of renunciation. If the sight of external parts such as hair, nails, and skin do not produce a feeling of renunciation, he should think upon internal objects such as flesh, intestines, and bones. He should make a point of trying to see a dissected corpse, and compare those organs which produce a feeling of renunciation with similar parts in his own body. Rather, he should imagine that body part to be his own. In this context Acharya Shantidev says:

*When will I be able to go to the rightful place of this body (i.e. the cremation ground), see skeletons of corpses, and compare my rotting body to those skeletons?*

*This body of mine (which looks good today) will rot so much, like the corpse in the cremation ground, that even wolves would be troubled by its foul smell and refuse to draw near!*

*The bones in my body which are held together now will be scattered (like the bones at the cremation ground)! What wonder then that my near and dear ones would abandon me? (Because they are always separate from me.) [Skt]*

After thus looking upon a part of the body for a long time with a feeling of renunciation, a man usually does not experience sexual passion at the sight of a beautiful woman, or woman at the sight of a handsome man. Being accustomed to regarding the body in its parts, a man is not attracted by its external appearance. He is reminded of specific, loathsome body parts and clearly sees them hidden behind that lovely exterior. I cannot help narrating a story from *Vishuddhi-marga* in this context.

There was in ancient times a city named Anuradhapur in Sinhala-dvipa. Nearby were numerous viharas. Acharya Buddhaghosha wrote *Vishuddhi-marga* and other books while living in one of them, named Mahavihara; the ruins of this and other old structures can still be seen. A hill located at a short distance from the city was known as Chaitya Hill and here lived a monk named Mahatishya. One day he was on his way to Anuradhapur to beg for food. Walking towards him on the same road was a woman who had quarrelled with her husband and was

on her way to her parents' house. At the sight of the monk, she laughed aloud with a view to attracting him. At once he lifted up his head and looked at her. The sight of her teeth reminded him of the skeleton which was the object of his daily meditation. That is why he did not see the woman's external appearance, but thought that a skeleton was standing before his eyes. He continued on his way. The woman's husband was following her and asked him, 'Sir, did you see a beautiful young woman, adorned with jewels, passing by?' The monk replied:

*I do not know whether it was a man or a woman who passed by; but a skeleton is certainly walking down this road!*

This object of meditation as good as destroys sexual desire and the yogi is able to reach the first level of meditation. Later he can attain other levels with the help of other objects of meditation.

## (2) Friendship or Universal Love [*Maitri*]

Friendship or universal love is beneficial to a person characterized by hatred. It has been expounded as follows:

*With the awareness that all living creatures desire happiness as one does oneself, one should gradually cultivate a feeling of affection towards them.*

*May I ever be happy and free from unhappiness. Likewise, may my friends, neutral acquaintances [i.e. neither friends nor enemies], and enemies be happy!*

*May all creatures in this village [or town] and in the surrounding fields ever be happy. May all creatures in this kingdom and this universe be happy!*

*Likewise, may all—men and women, Aryas and Anaryas, gods and men—be happy! May creatures that have regressed be happy! May all creatures in the ten directions be happy!<sup>22</sup>*

These verses describe how a feeling of affection should be gradually cultivated. First of all a person should develop love for himself and then extend it to his friends, to his acquaintances, and to his enemies. He should first develop it for the creatures in his village and gradually extend its boundary to the whole universe. He should conjure up in his

<sup>22</sup> The ten directions are the four cardinal points, their mid-points, and the upward and downward directions.—M.K.

imagination the entire world of living creatures and love them sincerely. He should develop the feeling that his heart is filled with love, that he has no enemy left whatsoever, that wild animals such as lions and tigers have also become his friends, that serpents are sprawled over his body and a tiger is sleeping peacefully beside him, with its head on his lap, and that he has nothing at all to fear from anyone any longer.

A person who harbours a strong feeling of hatred constantly thinks of his enemies, which proves to be a great obstacle to the feeling of friendship. Such a person should repeatedly study the teaching of the Buddha and of holy men, and try to remove the feeling of enmity from his heart. It is well to remember Lord Buddha's advice to monks in this regard in *Kakachupama-sutta*. The Buddha said:

O monks, in ancient times in this self-same city of Shravasti, there lived a respectable woman named Vaidehika. She was reputed in the whole city as one who spoke sweetly, and who was humble and calm. O monks, this Vaidehika had a *dasi* named Kali who was ever alert and industrious. One day this *dasi* wondered, 'Does my mistress really possess a calm temperament or is it that she lacks an opportunity to scold me because I do all my chores on time?' In order to dispel this doubt, she decided to test her mistress, and one day she got up a little late. Then Vaidehika asked her, 'What is this, Kali? Why are you so late today?' Kali replied, 'Madam, it just happened that I am late.' Vaidehika frowned, raised her eyebrows, and said, 'What a wretched *dasi*! How dare she get up late!' After a few days, the *dasi* Kali got up even later. That day the mistress cursed her a great deal. After a few more days had passed, Kali wanted to test her mistress once again and got up very late. What can one say! Her mistress flared up with rage. She picked up an iron bar lying there and hit Kali on the head with it. Poor frightened Kali ran out into the street screaming. The neighbours gathered around her and started inquiring what was amiss and why her head was bleeding. Thereupon Kali said to them, 'This is the deed of my mistress who you thought was very calm-tempered!' This deed gave Vaidehika a bad reputation in the whole town as one who appeared to be saintly, but was in fact very cruel.

O monks, some monks are just like that respectable woman, and appear to be very calm as long as they are not subjected to unpleasant words. But when a monk is attacked with harsh words, it becomes clear

whether or not he is really calm-tempered. [ . . . ] O monks, some will speak to you at the proper time and some at the wrong time, some will speak of an offence you have committed and some will accuse you falsely, some will speak soft words to you and some harsh, some will address you with affection and some with hatred. You should ensure that you do not develop a prejudice against them. You should also guard yourselves against uttering unpleasant words, and learn to love the same person who has attacked you with verbal arrows. Thus you should learn to develop a feeling of love for the whole world. You should not be angry even if wicked thieves cut off your head with a saw. He who feels angry on such an occasion does not deserve to be my disciple. You should love even those thieves, and utilizing this as an opportunity, cultivate in your heart a feeling of love towards all living creatures.

One should try to completely uproot the hatred that has pierced one's heart, thinking of the conduct as well as preaching of holy men. Saintly men such as Eknath and Tukaram endured all kinds of harassment from wicked people and preserved their serenity. Despite such notable examples, one feels angry at others for trifling reasons and harbours vile thoughts of revenge for insignificant offences. If one does not abandon such bad thoughts, will one be able to experience the happiness described in the following words?

*When will I attain the fortunate state when all people are seen to be but a form of the Brahma? Happiness will then know no bounds, and the seas will roll with joy! [Marathi]*

Thinking thus, one should destroy the feeling of enmity in one's heart and carry to perfection the feeling of love. This feeling leads to the attainment of three types of meditation, and also to several other advantages. Acharya Shantidev has said:

*In this world, a forgiving man obtains a good appearance, health, joy, a long life, and happiness such as that enjoyed by a sovereign king. [Skt]*

### (3) Awareness of Death [*Marana Smriti*]

For a person who is characterized by delusion, this object of meditation is initially useful. It is expounded thus:

*One's life is about to be extinguished like a lamp placed in a gust of wind. Realizing this from the example of others, one should meditate upon death.*

*Even men who had amassed substantial wealth have disappeared from this world. Likewise I too shall die (one day). Death is a certainty for me!*

*Just as the sun races ahead from the time it rises to the time it sets, life—which is eager to proceed—races ahead without moving back even a little.*

If one thinks thus upon death without fear, sloth is as good as destroyed. Awareness of Death as an object of meditation leads only to finding access to samadhi, not retention of samadhi. However, it destroys sloth and makes a person alert and dutiful; it also makes him capable of retaining samadhi with the help of other objects of meditation.

#### (4) The Earth Circle [*Prithvi Mandala*]

Retention of samadhi can be attained by placing circular images of the earth, water, light, etc. before one's eyes and thinking upon them. All types of men benefit from meditating upon such a circle.

A person who wishes to meditate upon the Earth Circle should go to a plot of ploughed land or of land where no grass has sprouted, keep his eyes on a circular piece of ground, and try to concentrate his mind upon it. If this does not help him towards successful meditation, he should prepare a circle of red clay, with a diameter of one span of a hand [the length between thumb and little finger of an extended palm] and four fingers' breath, and meditate upon it in solitude. Those meditating upon the 'circle of water' should concentrate on things like a circular pond, well, etc. Those meditating upon the 'circle of light' can concentrate on the orb of the sun or moon, or the flame of a lamp, etc. Concentrating on this Circle leads to the attainment of all four meditation [levels] of the retention of Samadhi.

#### *Hindrances to Samadhi*

The attainment of samadhi can be repeatedly hindered if factors like the dwelling place, the surrounding area, conversation, companions, meals, the season, etc. are not suitable. Therefore these things should be properly selected with forethought.

A yogi's dwelling place which is situated at a height affording a scenic view of the surroundings, or near a river bank, or on a sea shore is favourable to samadhi. This must be the reason for the caves carved out [of the mountainside] for monks at places such as Karla and Kanheri.<sup>23</sup> The area surrounding the dwelling place should be good. If it is infested with drunkards and immoral people, or with wild creatures such as snakes and tigers, it is bound to disrupt the samadhi repeatedly. A yogi should abandon irreligious conversation altogether and observe moderation even in religious conversation. A yogi should refrain from associating with a volatile person in the beginning; he should associate only with steady-minded and religious people. A person can select food according to his constitution. He should partake of the kind of food that gives him energy, in moderation and with regularity. At the beginning of meditation, the season has to suit the yogi; some feel well during summer, some during the rainy season, and some in winter. Everyone should make this selection according to his experience. On the whole the following advice in the *Bhagavad Gita* is in accordance with the Buddhist belief:

*The meditation of a man—whose food is adequate, dwelling place is adequate, effort and action are adequate, sleeping and waking [hours] are adequate—is free from suffering. [Skt]*

#### *The Discipline of True Wisdom*

Gentlemen, let us now briefly consider the third step on the Buddhist Path, namely, true wisdom. This is of two types: worldly and otherworldly. The former enables a person to do benevolent deeds in worldly life or defeat the plotting of the wicked, with only a little effort. Its illustrations are found in the form of numerous stories in the *Jataka* text. The otherworldly wisdom means a perfect understanding of the Four Noble Truths, the chain of causation, etc. This otherworldly wisdom alone is known as 'true wisdom'.

*Only he who has attained samadhi is able to see and understand perfectly.*

<sup>23</sup> The Karla caves are located near Malavali on the Pune-Mumbai route, and the Kanheri caves at Borivali in the suburbs of Mumbai.—M.K.

In accordance with this saying, a yogi, after completing the Discipline of Concentration, should seek to attain true wisdom. First of all a yogi should gain a perfect understanding of the Four Noble Truths—Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the Extinction of Suffering, and the Path to the Extinction of Suffering. The Truth of Suffering is only to be understood. The Truth of the Cause of Suffering, that is, Craving, is to be abandoned. The Truth of the Extinction of Suffering, that is, Nirvana, is to be aimed at. And the Truth of the Path to the Extinction of Suffering, that is, the Noble Eight-fold Path, is to be studied. Therefore a yogi should comprehend the Truth that is to be understood, discard that which is to be abandoned, attain the aim, and study that which is to be studied.

Ignorance [*avidya*] is the cause of propensities [*sanskaras*]; these in turn are the cause of awareness [*vidnyana*] and that is the cause of individuality [*namarupa*, literally, name and body]; individuality is the cause of the six sensory functions [*shadaayatana*]; the six sensory functions are the cause of contact [*sparsa*], contact is the cause of sensation [*vedana*]; sensation is the cause of craving [*trishna*], craving is the cause of clinging to existence [*upaadaana*], clinging to existence is the cause of existence, existence is the cause of birth; birth is the cause of old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, etc. This is known as the Chain of Causation [*pratitya-samutpaada*]. The cause of old age and death is birth; the cause of birth is existence or action (i.e. karma); the cause of karma is clinging or greed; the cause of greed is craving; the cause of craving is sensation, that is, the three states of happiness, unhappiness, and indifference; the cause of sensation is touch, that is, the contact of faculties and object; the cause of touch is the six sensory functions, that is, the mind and the five faculties; the cause of the six sensory functions is individuality, the cause of individuality is awareness, the cause of awareness is propensities; the cause of propensities is ignorance or wrong knowledge.

Ignorance, or wrong knowledge, is briefly classified according to the Buddhist view into three: (1) to consider the world to be permanent when it is in fact impermanent (that is, subject to transformation), (2) to consider the soul to be an indestructible, unchangeable object, when it is in fact not, and (3) to consider worldly life to be happy when it is in fact filled with unhappiness. This kind of wrong knowledge is the

root cause of all worldly suffering. This ignorance is destroyed by the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths; and when ignorance is destroyed, so are automatically destroyed propensities, etc. that result from it. No one can tell what the state of beings was prior to the emergence of ignorance. This entire worldly life [*sansara*] is without a beginning; so therefore is ignorance without a beginning. Lord Buddha says:

*O monks, this worldly life is without a beginning. It is not possible to know the former state of beings that are covered in ignorance, bound by craving, and trapped in the cycle of worldly life.—Samyutta Nikaya*

The Noble Eightfold Path is the middle path which avoids the two extremes, similarly the Chain of Causation lies midway in the schools of philosophy. At the time of the Buddha, there were some philosophers who maintained that the soul is a permanent entity, and others who claimed that there is no such entity as the soul. The Chain of Causation lies in between the two, because it states that the soul is neither permanent nor impermanent, but subject to change according to the rule of cause and effect. If there is cause, there is effect; if there is no cause, there is no effect. Lord Buddha says to Katyayana,

*O Katyayana, one extreme is that everything exists (i.e. the soul is permanent), the other is that nothing exists (i.e. there is no soul). Without going to these two extremes, Tathagata preaches the Middle Path, which is the Chain of Causation, that ignorance causes propensities, etc.—Samyutta Nikaya*

The rules of causation are unchangeable, and are known by epithets such as the 'certainty of religion' [*dharma-niyamata*], 'state of religion' [*dharma-sthiti*], etc. The Buddha says:

*Whether Tathagata is born or not, this power, or state of the Dhamma, or certainty of the Dhamma, or the chain of causation, does exist. Tathagata understands it, has it revealed to him, tells it to others after understanding it and having it revealed to him, preaches it to people, and tells them to comprehend it with their own intellect.—Samyutta Nikaya*

'Is this world permanent or not? Will this world end or not? Are the body and life the same or different? Is a creature reborn after death?'

Trying to answer such questions is likely to seriously impede the attainment of true wisdom, because these questions are not properly formulated. Therefore a yogi should set them aside and achieve a perfect knowledge of the Chain of Causation, and carry his true wisdom to perfection, because true wisdom alone leads to Nirvana.

Gentlemen, I have thus presented before you the gist of Buddhism through the Discipline of Morality, the Discipline of Concentration, and the Discipline of True Wisdom. This subject is basically difficult. I have made an attempt to make it as easy as possible. I do not know to what extent it has succeeded.

### 3. The Sangha: Part I

Before the Buddha started preaching his Dhamma, there were numerous *shramanas* (or sanyasis) belonging to diverse sects in North India. A group of *shramanas* belonging to a particular sect was known as a 'sangha' or a 'gana'. Many such sanghas are mentioned in the *Tripitaka*, but not much information is available about them. However, the sangha established by the Buddha [henceforth the Sangha] is described in detail in the text *Vinaya [Pitaka]*. I present before you today a small portion of it by way of information about the Buddhist Sangha.

While living in an area known as Rishi-pattana in Kashi, Lord Buddha preached to the five monks who were his former assistants and accepted them as his adherents, as has been described in the first lecture. Of these five monks, the one named Kaundinya became the Buddha's disciple first, after him Vapra and Bhadriya, and later Mahanama and Ashwajit also became his disciples. They were all Brahmins. Lord Buddha and his five disciples lived in Rishi-pattana. At the time, there lived in the nearby city of Varanasi a wealthy merchant's son named Yasha. His father had built three mansions for him to live in during the summer, rainy season, and winter. But Yasha derived no happiness from all this prosperity; he began to think that unhappiness pervades everything. One night he left his mansion, saying 'Oh, what sorrow! Oh, what hardship!' and came to the place where the Buddha lived. Lord Buddha was walking back and forth at dawn, and saw Yasha who again shouted, 'There is trouble everywhere; there is calamity

everywhere.' At these words, Lord Buddha said, 'O Yasha, there is no trouble here, there is no calamity here.' Thereupon Yasha went and sat near the Buddha, listened to the Lord's preaching, attained Nirvana right there and then, and entered the Sangha.

The following day Yasha's father came to Rishi-pattana, looking for him. He asked the Buddha whether he had seen Yasha, and the Buddha said, 'O Grihapati, do not be afraid.<sup>24</sup> You shall see Yasha right here.' Reassured by these words, he sat on a seat near the Buddha who preached to him. This filled his mind with total renunciation and he immediately became the Buddha's lay follower. Thereupon the Buddha united him with Yasha right there. Yasha's father did not feel at all sorry at Yasha's renouncing worldly life, because the light of the Buddha's preaching shone in his mind. He said to the Buddha, 'Lord, Yasha's mother is very eager to see him and is grieving for him. Kindly therefore come to our house for a meal tomorrow, along with Yasha.' The Buddha took Yasha along the following day to the man's house. There he preached the Dhamma to Yasha's mother and his wife in his former stage of life. This made the light [of understanding] shine in their minds, and they immediately became the Buddha's lay followers. Naturally then, they did not at all grieve over Yasha renouncing his home.

When the news that Yasha had become a monk reached his four friends—Vimal, Subahu, Purnajit, and Gavampati—they went to Rishi-pattana and met him. Yasha took them to the Buddha. The preaching of Lord Buddha made the light shine in their minds and they entered the Sangha right there. When this news reached Yasha's fifty [other] friends in the area, they too met the Buddha in Rishi-pattana and entered the Buddhist Sangha. In this manner, the Lord collected a Sangha of sixty monks when he lived in Rishi-pattana. All these monks had attained the Arhat stage. The Buddha gathered them in one place and said, 'O monks, I have been liberated from worldly and otherworldly bonds, and so have you. Therefore, O monks, get ready

<sup>24</sup> Grihapati ('Gahapati' in Pali) means a person of the farmer class; D. Kosambi, 'Preface' in *Visuddhimagga* (Harvard Oriental Series), p. xvi. It has also been translated as 'the master of the house'.—M.K.



now to preach the Dhamma for the good of the masses [*bahujana*], for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the people, and for the welfare of gods and men. Go singly [literally, two of you should not go together]. Preach the religious Path that is beneficial in the beginning, beneficial in the middle, and beneficial in the end.’

The Buddha had himself initiated these sixty monks. At that time, the rite of initiation [*pravrajya*] was conducted by the words, ‘Come, O monk’, uttered by the Buddha. But when the monks were sent in all directions, the number of new monks increased. It became difficult to bring to the Buddha, from distant areas, those desirous of entering the Sangha. Therefore the Buddha allowed the monks to induct such aspirants into the Sangha directly. He said, ‘O monks, henceforth you may yourselves conduct the rites of initiation [*pravrajya*] and ordination [*upasampada*] into the Sangha, in accordance with the following rules. The aspirant should shave his head and cover himself with ochre clothes. He should then be made to sit down without crossing his legs [i.e. on his knees] and to repeat three times with palms joined together, “I take refuge in the Buddha [*Buddham saranam gacchhami*],<sup>25</sup> I take refuge in the Religion [*Dhammam saranam gacchhami*], I take refuge in the Sangha [*Sangham saranam gacchhami*].” I give you permission to conduct initiation and ordination in this manner.’<sup>26</sup>

After the end of the four rainy months, Lord Buddha went from Varanasi to Gaya, preaching the Dhamma. A Brahmin named Uruvela Kashyapa with matted hair lived there. He had five hundred matted-haired disciples. The entire populace of Magadha region respected him very highly. After seeing the Buddha’s extraordinary brilliance and marvellous courage, and after hearing his incomparable preaching, he and his disciples cut off their hair and threw it along with their articles of worship of the perpetual sacred fire into the water; and they became the Buddha’s disciples. Uruvela Kashyapa had a brother named Nadi Kashyapa who lived on the river bank nearby, along with his three

<sup>25</sup> One takes refuge in the Buddha as a guru, or founder of the Sangha—not as an incarnation of God.

<sup>26</sup> *Pravrajya* [Pali *pabbajja*] meant the rite by which a person renounced the world and entered the Sangha as a *shramaner*; a later rite known as *upasampada* inducted the *shramaner* as a full-fledged monk into the Sangha. I have used the words initiation and ordination for the two respective rites.—M.K.

hundred disciples. He saw the articles of worship of the perpetual sacred fire and the matted hair flowing down the river and suspected that something untoward had happened to his older brother. He came to his brother’s dwelling place and saw that he had become the Buddha’s disciple. Then he also became the Buddha’s disciple along with his own disciples. Uruvela Kashyapa had a third brother named Gaya Kashyapa who also lived in the same region. He also became the Buddha’s disciple along with his two hundred matted-haired disciples.

Lord Buddha went to the city of Rajagriha along with all these disciples who formerly wore matted hair. King Bimbisara ruled there at the time. Hearing the news of the Buddha’s arrival, he went with a large entourage to his dwelling place. At that time people felt a doubt as to whether the Buddha was the guru of Kashyapa, or the other way around. This doubt was removed when Kashyapa bowed down and touched the Buddha’s feet. King Bimbisara donated an excellent park known as Veluvana to the Sangha headed by the Buddha.

Lord Buddha lived in this park along with his Sangha. At the time a famous wandering religious mendicant named Sanjay lived near Rajagriha. Chief among Sanjay’s disciples were the Brahmins Sariputta and Moggallana [Sariputra and Maudgalyayana in Sanskrit], and they had decided that the one who first finds the ultimate peace should tell the other about it. One day Sariputta saw Assaji [Sanskrit Ashvajit] wandering about begging food in Rajagriha, and Assaji’s happy face, indicative of renunciation, created great respect for him in Sariputta’s mind. He left Rajagriha, followed Assaji, and caught up with him on the way. After asking the customary questions about his well-being, Sariputta said, ‘O long-lived one, your face looks joyful. Who is your guru? Which religion do you follow?’

Assaji: ‘O long-lived one, my guru is the Great Shramana Shakyaputra (Buddha). I follow his Dhamma.’

Sariputta: ‘What is your guru’s religion? Which belief does he teach?’

Assaji: ‘I have recently become the Buddha’s disciple; I am not capable of preaching the Dhamma in detail. However, I will be able to give you a gist.’

Sariputta: ‘That is all right. Tell me whatever you know—whether

it is only a little or a great deal. I want the gist. What is the use of verbiage?’

*Assaji: Tathagata has revealed the cause of the sorrowful states like the five-fold clinging to existence [panch-skandha] that have resulted from a cause; and also how to prevent them. This is the teaching of the Great Shramana.*<sup>27</sup>

After understanding this, light shone immediately in Sariputta’s heart. He conveyed the news to Moggallana, whereupon both went to the Buddha and entered the Sangha. Along with them, 250 disciples of Sanjay, the religious mendicant, also became the Buddha’s disciples. Sariputta and Moggallana later became the chief disciples of the Buddha.

The arrival of Lord Buddha created great commotion everywhere in the city of Rajagriha. One day this person became the Buddha’s disciple, the next day another religious mendicant became the Buddha’s disciple—this was the only topic of discussion for the people. Some accused the Buddha openly, saying, ‘Is this Shramana Gautam come here to render our region son-less? At the sight of monks they would say,

*‘This Great Shramana has come to the Magadhians’ city of Girivraja [Rajagriha],<sup>28</sup> and taken away all the disciples of Sanjay. Whom will he take away next?’*

The monks conveyed this news to the Lord, whereupon he said, ‘O monks, this public scandal will not last long; it will die down within a week. When anyone accuses you with the (above) verse, you should reply with this verse:

*‘The very brave Tathagata takes people along with the help of the good Dhamma. Why should people envy him when they know that he persuades people with the help of the Dhamma?’*

<sup>27</sup> This verse is very famous and is found in many of the ancient rock edicts.

<sup>28</sup> The city of Rajagriha was known as Girivraja, probably because it was surrounded by hills.

Thus when the monks were accused with the former verse, they would reply with the latter. When the people understood that the Shakya-putriya *shramanas* persuaded others only with the help of religion, not with the help of irreligious means, they gave up accusing the monks.<sup>29</sup> The public scandal died down within a week.

Seeing that the Sangha was greatly honoured everywhere, some free-loaders also began to enter it. Once the monks were invited to meals repeatedly for a few days, and they were served specially prepared delicacies with great respect. A Brahmin saw this and entered the Sangha with a view to getting his fill of food. When the invitations were over, the other monks told him to take a begging bowl and go with them to beg for food. Then he said, ‘I will stay here only if you feed me, otherwise I will leave the Sangha and go away.’ There were many others like him who entered the Sangha only for worldly gain. In order to bring this under control, Lord Buddha was compelled to make new rules of ordination, acceding to the request of the monks who had no desire for gain. There is no time to describe the occasion on which these rules were made. However, the rite of ordination which prevails in countries like Burma and Ceylon at present includes almost all the rules laid down by the Buddha, therefore I cannot but present it at least in brief.

The aspirant who wishes to enter the Sangha is first asked to make a monk his religious teacher. He has to request him three times: ‘Sir, kindly be my religious teacher.’ When the monk agrees, the aspirant is shown his begging bowl and monk’s robe, and he goes to live in the dwelling place allotted to him. Then another learned monk in the Sangha comes forward and asks for permission to explain properly to the aspirant what he needs to do and how he needs to answer various questions. After getting permission from the Sangha, this monk goes to the aspirant, explains everything to him, and returns to inform the Sangha of this. At this time the Sangha calls the aspirant again. The aspirant has to go to the place where the Sangha has assembled and pray three times thus: ‘Sirs, I humbly request the Sangha for ordination. May the Sangha feel compassion for me and uplift me.’ Then another learned monk seeks permission to inquire of the aspirant whether or

<sup>29</sup> The monks in the Buddhist Sangha were known as Shakya-putriya *shramanas* [i.e. the *shramanas* belonging to Shakya-putra or the Buddha].

not he is free of the things that would impede his ordination. When permission is granted, the monk asks him the following questions:

Monk: 'O brave one, this is the time to tell the truth. Here you need to report what has really occurred. I shall now ask you certain questions; you should answer in the affirmative if the thing is true and in the negative if the thing is not true. Do you suffer from the following diseases?<sup>30</sup> Do you have leprosy?'

Aspirant: 'No, Sir.'

Monk: 'Scrofula?'

Aspirant: 'No, Sir.'

Monk: 'Consumption?'

Aspirant: 'No, Sir.'

Monk: 'Epilepsy?'

Aspirant: 'No, Sir.'

Monk: 'You are a human being, are you not?'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'You are a man, are you not?'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'You are independent, are you not?'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'You are free from debt, are you not?'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'You are not the king's soldier, are you?'

Aspirant: 'No, Sir (I am not).'

Monk: 'You have your parents' permission, do you not?'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'You have completed twenty years of age, have you not?'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'You possess the necessary bowl and robes, do you not?'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'What is your name?'

Aspirant: 'Such-and-such.'

<sup>30</sup> The reason to inquire about these five diseases was that at one time they were especially prevalent in Magadha, and many people joined the Sangha in order to get quick treatment, after which they left. See D. Kosambi, *Baudhha Sanghacha Parichaya*, p. 17.—M.K.

Monk: 'Who is your religious teacher?'

Aspirant: 'So-and-so.'

After the aspirant has returned satisfactory answers as above, the monk makes a request to the Sangha three times to this effect: that the aspirant is free from the things that obstruct ordination, that he possesses the necessary bowl and robes, and that he prays for ordination. So-and-so is his religious teacher. The Sangha may ordain him if it deems it fit. He who agrees should remain silent; he who disagrees should speak out. When the entire Sangha remains silent, he says, 'I assume that the Sangha is silent because it deems this fit.'

Then the aspirant is told to measure his shadow with his feet,<sup>31</sup> he is told about the seasons, months, etc., and instructed about the following four supports (on which one has to depend).

Monk: 'Your renunciation is intended for depending upon begged food; therefore you should try to depend upon begged food all your life. If you receive food on the occasion of special alms given to the Sangha, you should know that to be an additional gain.'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'Your renunciation is intended for depending upon a monk's robe made out of strips of cloth found in the street, etc.; therefore you should try to depend upon such robes all your life. If you receive robes made of cloth (received from any householder), you should know that to be an additional gain.'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'Your renunciation is intended for dwelling under trees; therefore you should try to dwell under trees all your life. If you get a dwelling place such as a vihara, you should know that to be an additional gain.'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'Your renunciation is intended for depending upon medicine made out of cow's urine; therefore you should try to depend upon medicine made out of cow's urine all your life. If you get (medicinal

<sup>31</sup> In olden times, measuring one's shadow with one's feet was a way of telling the time.

ingredients, such as) ghee and butter, you should know that to be an additional gain.'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Thereafter he is informed about the four things that are forbidden.

Monk: 'A monk who has entered the Sangha ought not to engage in sexual intercourse. A monk who engages in sexual intercourse would become a non-*shramana*, a non-follower of Shakya-putra. A man whose head has been cut off cannot survive only as a headless body. Therefore you ought not to do this as long as you live.'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'A monk who has entered the Sangha ought not to steal; he ought not to take even a blade of grass without permission. A monk who steals would become a non-*shramana*, a non-follower of Shakya-putra. Therefore you ought not to do this as long as you live.'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'A monk who has entered the Sangha ought not to kill knowingly; he ought not to kill even an insect or an ant. A monk who knowingly kills a human being—even a foetus—would become a non-*shramana*, a non-follower of Shakya-putra. Therefore you ought not to do this as long as you live.'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

Monk: 'A monk who has entered the Sangha ought not to boast about having attained meditation and samadhi. He ought not to boast even that he likes living in solitude. A monk who makes false boasts about having attained samadhi, with a sinful desire and being overcome by craving, becomes a non-*shramana*, a non-follower of Shakya-putra. Therefore you ought not to do this as long as you live.'

Aspirant: 'Yes, Sir.'

This brief description of the rite of ordination would give some idea about the chief rules to be followed by a monk. I shall now explain briefly who a *shramaner* is.

Lord Buddha stayed in Rajagriha for some time and travelled to Kapilavastu, preaching the Religion. There he lived in a vihara known as Nigrodhaaraama. One day he entered the city of Kapilavastu to beg for food and, while wandering about, reached the palace of King

Shuddhodana. There he took the seat set out for him. Rahul's mother (Bodhisattva's wife) saw him and said to Rahul-kumar, 'Look, Child, this is your father. Go to him and ask for your [patrimonial] share!' At these words, Rahul went and stood before the Buddha. After some time Lord Buddha left his seat and went away. Rahul too went after him, saying, 'Give me my share.' After reaching the vihara, Lord Buddha sent for Sariputra and asked him to give Rahul sanyas—as his patrimonial wealth. Rahul had not completed twenty years of age, which is why he was made a *shramaner*. The practice of making *shramaners* started from this time.

A *shramaner* should not live independently; he has to live under the shelter of a monk. At the time of taking vows, he has his head shaven. Then, carrying ochre clothes he does namaskar to the assembled monks and says the following sentence three times:

*In order that I may experience Nirvana which provides freedom from all suffering, be compassionate and give me sanyas, taking these ochre clothes.*

Then one of the monks makes him repeat three times the sentences: 'I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in the Dhamma; I take refuge in the Sangha.' He also teaches him the ten rules that he needs to observe: (1) To give up killing, (2) To give up stealing, (3) To practise celibacy, (4) Not to tell a lie, (5) Not to imbibe liquor and other intoxicants, (6) To have his meal before midday, (7) To dissociate himself from dancing, singing, and other such things which arouse sexual desire, (8) Not to wear garlands, marks on the forehead and other such marks of luxury, (9) Not to sleep on a high and large bed, (10) Not to accept gold and silver. These ten rules are to be observed by a *shramaner*.

The Sangha has to assemble together on two days every month—*pournima* and the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight—and observe acts associated with *uposatha*. On these days the 227 rules included in the Prohibited Conduct for monks are read before the entire Sangha. If any of the monks has conducted himself in contravention of any rule, he has to confess this violation right then and there, and undergo the prescribed expiation. These 227 rules are known as Praatimoksha, and the reading of the list Praatimokshoddesha.

During the Buddha's lifetime, and for some years after him, the entire Sangha would live in one place during the four rainy months, and wander around preaching during the remaining eight months. This situation probably lasted until the time of Ashoka. During Ashoka's time, many monks went to other countries to preach the Dhamma; even so, the Sangha generally began to acquire a more settled character. This resulted in the great growth of Buddhist literature. But the Sangha did not retain its original vigour.

### *Dissensions in the Sangha*

The Buddha's Sangha and fame were both on the increase constantly. At that time, a young man named Bhaddiya [Bhadriya in Sanskrit] was the chief of the Shakya kingdom. At the insistence of his very close friend Anuruddha Shakya, he gave up the kingdom and decided to enter the Sangha. Together with these two, the four sons of Shakya families—Ananda, Bhagu, Kimbila, and Devadatta—and their barber Upali also entered the Sangha. Upali was ordained first of all; he later became Vinaya-dhar, that is, expert in the laws of the Sangha. Ananda became Dharma-dhar, that is, adept in preaching the Dhamma; and Devadatta became the one who created dissension in the Sangha.

When Lord Buddha lived in Veluvana in Rajagriha, Devadatta went to him and said with his palms joined together, 'Lord, you have now become old; it is time for you to take your ease. Kindly give the Sangha into my keeping now. I accept leadership of the Sangha.' To this Lord Buddha replied, 'O Devadatta, I am not willing to give the Sangha into the keeping of even Sariputta and Moggallana. How then would I give it into the keeping of a person such as yourself who lacks understanding and strength?' At this Devadatta was inwardly furious and fell prey to the evil desire to take revenge on the Buddha.

King Bimbisara's son Ajatashatru was a devotee of Devadatta. Ajatashatru had killed his father and obtained the throne; and he had promised Devadatta help in killing the Buddha and getting him the position of the Buddha. He made an attempt to send some assassins to kill the Buddha, but it did not succeed. On the contrary, the assassins themselves became the Buddha's followers. Therefore Devadatta arranged to let loose a rogue elephant named Naalaagiri on Lord

Buddha when the latter was wandering about in Rajagriha begging for food. Lord Buddha looked at it with great affection. Without harming the Buddha, the elephant went straight and stood before him, and put the dust off his feet upon its own head. Then it went straight back to the elephant stables and stood at its appointed spot. This great wonder astonished the residents of Rajagriha and they said:

*Some control (animals) with a stick, some with a goad, and some with a whip.  
But the Great Sage, the Buddha, conquered the elephant without a stick or  
any weapon at all!*

Thus Devadatta failed in his attempts to kill the Buddha and become the Buddha himself. He then hit upon a new stratagem to create a division within the Sangha. He knew very well that Lord Buddha would not make new rules for the Sangha which would be conducive to the mortification of the body. He also knew that some people are impressed by those who mortify the body and follow them. Therefore he decided to use a stratagem. He would go to the Buddha and request him to make new rules for the Sangha that he would not agree to. When the Buddha refused, he would make a noise among the people that the Buddha does not teach total renunciation, and thus attract some monks in the Sangha towards himself. He conveyed this stratagem to his sanyasi assistants Kokalika and Samudradatta; then he gathered together all the people who shared his views and went to the Buddha. He did namaskar, sat on one side, and said, 'Lord, you praise a person who has little desire and is contented; therefore kindly lay down these five new rules to be followed by the Sangha, because they would encourage contentment and lack of desire. (1) Monks should live in the forest all their lives. Any monk who lives in a village [or town] should be deemed guilty. (2) Monks should subsist only on begged food all their lives. Any monk who accepts an invitation to a meal should be deemed guilty. (3) Monks should manage with robes made out of strips of cloth collected in the streets, etc. all their lives. Any monk who accepts cloth given by a householder and makes a robe out of it should be deemed guilty. (4) Monks should live under a tree all their lives. Any monk who lives in a covered place (like a hut) should be deemed guilty. (5) All monks should refrain from eating fish all their lives. Any monk who eats fish should be deemed guilty.'

Lord Buddha said:

O Devadatta, there is no need for these new rules. A person who wishes to live in a forest may do so; one who does not may live near a village. A person who wishes to subsist on begged food may do so; one who does not may accept an invitation to a meal. A person who wishes to manage with a robe made out of strips may do so; one who does not may make a robe out of cloth given by a householder. I have already given permission to live under a tree (except for the four rainy months). A monk should not eat fish if he sees, hears, or suspects that the fish has been killed especially in order to make food to be given on begging, otherwise he may do so.

These words made Devadatta very happy. He spread them all through Rajagriha and lured some monks and lay followers towards himself. When Sariputta and Moggallana, the Buddha's chief disciples, heard the news that some monks had left the Sangha and joined Devadatta's group of disciples, they went to him with the Buddha's permission and brought back into the Sangha the monks who had left. Devadatta later felt remorse for his sinful act, but he died before he could express it to the Buddha.

Another dissension had arisen during the Buddha's lifetime in the city of Kaushambi. When Lord Buddha heard of this, he went there and tried to reason with the two factions in many different ways. At the time one of the young monks said to him, 'Lord, you have become old. Why do you get involved in such troublesome matters? We will manage them ourselves.'

At these words of the young monk, Lord Buddha left the place. During that rainy season he lived in a forest. Here all the lay followers were angry that the monks did not listen to Lord Buddha's words of conciliation and continued to quarrel, and they decided not to give food to those monks. This brought the monks to their senses; they went to Lord Buddha and apologized for their offences.

Thus there were two occasions during the Buddha's lifetime when dissension arose within the Sangha. But instead of weakening the Sangha, it strengthened it. On both occasions the populace experienced clearly the Buddha's disinterestedness and the lay followers' implicit faith in him.

Lord Buddha made no caste distinction. Just as the Sangha had Brahmins like Sariputta and Moggallana, it also had a Chandala like Sopaka.

The Buddha had applied to the Sangha the following principle in its entirety:

*No one is a Chandala by birth, and no one is a Brahmin by birth. One becomes a Chandala because of one's actions (karma); one becomes a Brahmin because of one's actions.*

For a time he had not established a Sangha for nuns; but later he established that as well. The Buddha had laid down some strict rules for the Sangha of nuns, appropriate to the prevailing conditions. A Bengali gentleman, Rao Bahadur Sharad Chandra Das, C.I.E., who is proficient in the Tibetan language, concludes from this alone that the Buddha opposed women's emancipation. There are many unfounded charges levelled against Buddhism; I consider this to be one of them.<sup>32</sup>

According to Hinduism, women and Shudras do not possess the right to study the Vedas; they have to content themselves with the Puranas. Buddhism has no such restriction. Buddhist women have the freedom to read all religious texts. At present there are many women in Burma who have studied and are studying the *Tripitaka*. Following the custom of the [former] Burmese kings, the British government arranges for examinations in the Buddhist literature in Pali and distributes awards. I know that several women have passed this examination and won awards.

In *Mangala-sutta* and *Sigala-sutta*, the Buddha has preached that householders should honour housewives. Householders such as Anathapindika had attained a prime position among lay followers, so had housewives such as Vishakha among the female lay followers [*upasikas*].

<sup>32</sup> Buddhist nuns were bound by 311 rules, as compared to the 227 rules for monks. The Buddha initially refused to allow women into his Sangha; when he finally agreed, he laid down eight chief rules of behaviour specifically for them, which underscore their subordinate status vis-à-vis monks. For a detailed discussion of the gender disparity within the Sangha, see Meena Talim, *Woman in Early Buddhist Literature*, Bombay: University of Bombay, 1972, pp. 14-52.—M.K.

If you hear the advice given by a chief *upasika* named Nakula-mata [i.e. Nakula's mother] to her husband, you would understand why she had attained a prime position in the group of female lay followers. Therefore I give below a gist of this advice.

Once, Lord Buddha lived at a place known as Shishumaragir in the region of Bharga. A householder there, named Nakula-pita [i.e. Nakula's father], was very ill. Everyone thought that his death was nigh. At that time his wife said to him:

O Grihapati, you should not die while still being attached to domestic life. The Lord has said that this kind of death (accompanied by domestic cares) is painful. O Grihapati, you perhaps suspect that I, Nakula-mata, would not be able to maintain the children after your death and would not be able to pull on with domestic life. But, O Grihapati, do not harbour such a suspicion. I know the craft of spinning cotton-wool and also making wool. With the help of this craft I will be able to maintain your children after your death. Therefore, O Grihapati, I think that you should not die with domestic cares on your mind.

O Grihapati, you perhaps also suspect that I, Nakula-mata, would marry again after you are gone. But discard this suspicion. You know that I have been practising celibacy prescribed for housewives (through the vows of *uposatha*) these sixteen years. How then would I remarry after your death?

O Grihapati, you perhaps suspect that after you die, I would not go and listen to the religious sermons of Lord Buddha and the Sangha. But be assured that after you are gone, I shall retain my respect for the Buddha's preaching. That is why you should die without any anxiety.

O Grihapati, you might suspect that after you are gone, I would not observe properly the conduct as advised by the Buddha. But be assured that I am one of the *upasikas* of the Buddha, whose conduct is excellent. Therefore you should die without any anxiety.

O Grihapati, do not think that I have not attained samadhi—and would therefore grieve your death terribly. Know that I am one of the Buddha's *upasikas* who have attained samadhi, and give up all anxiety.

O Grihapati, you perhaps also suspect that I have not yet understood the philosophy of Buddhism. But keep in mind that I am one of the philosopher-*upasikas*, and discard your anxiety.

When Nakula-mata thus consoled Nakula-pita, he felt reassured and was soon cured of his illness. When he had recovered, he went to the Buddha for a darshan. The Buddha then said to him, 'O Grihapati, you have a great deal of religious merit to your credit in that you have a wife like Nakula-mata who gives such good advice and loves you so much. O Grihapati, she is one of the *upasikas* who possess an excellent moral character. It is your good fortune that you have got such a wife!'

This single example would suffice to show you how highly the Buddha esteemed women. There are also other similar examples in the *Tripitaka* text, but I have to content myself with this one, for lack of time.

If the Buddha approved of women's emancipation, why did he make such strict rules for nuns? A brief answer is that he was compelled to do so, in view of the prevailing social conditions. For example, the Buddha made a condition that a nun should not live alone. There was no such prohibition for a monk. Naturally, it may appear at first glance that this rule is detrimental to women's emancipation. But considering the social structure at the time, it must be said that this rule was appropriate. This can be clearly seen from the following story of a nun named Shubha.

One day the nun Shubha was walking alone to the Amravana of Jivaka Vaidya. A rogue caught up with her on the way. Attracted by her beauty, he tried to persuade her to satisfy his lust. She tried to counsel him in different ways, but it had no effect on the man blinded by lust. Finally, when Shubha saw that he was prepared even to assault her, she said, 'Why do you stop me?' Again he started praising her lovely eyes and limbs, and said, 'O Beauty, your lovely eyes have aroused sexual passion in me. O Beauty, there is nothing in this world that is dearer to me than yourself.'

Shubha said, 'Is that all? You want only my eyes. No matter. Here, take my eye.' With these words, she plucked out her eye with her fingers and put it into his hand. The man was terrified to see this daring, and apologized to her by falling down at her feet. It was probably in order to spare the nuns such calamities that the Buddha made the rule forbidding them to live alone.

The Sangha of monks had great philosophers and preachers such as

Sariputra and Katyayana. Similarly the Sangha of nuns had Kshema, Utpala-varnaa, and others. There were many occasions when they counselled great, learned men with their authoritative words, and led them on the right path. Such stories are found in the *Tripitaka*. Let me cite one such amusing story, with Pali verses, and conclude this prolonged subject.

Once, a nun named Punnika [Purnika in Sanskrit] had gone to the river at dawn in order to fetch water for the use of nuns in the vihara. A Brahmin was having his early morning bath there. She said to him:

*'I get into the water in this cold weather to fetch water for fear of the Sangha of nuns (because they would otherwise reproach me). But, O Brahmin, what fear makes you get into the water with limbs frozen by the cold?'*

The Brahmin said:

*'I am engaged in an act of religious merit and in destroying sinful acts. Even when you know this, O Venerable Punnika, how can you ask this question? Any man, young or old, who sins, is freed from that sin through a bath at dawn. (Do you not know this?)'*

Punnika said:

*'O Brahmin, which ignorant person has told an ignorant person such as yourself, that a bath frees one from sin? Are all the creatures living in water, such as frogs, turtles, [water-]snakes, and crocodiles bound for heaven? Would men who kill goats and pigs, fishermen who kill fish, hunters, thieves, convicts sentenced to death, and other sinners be freed from their sinful acts by a bath? O Brahmin, if these rivers carry away your sins with their current, they would also carry away your religious merit. Then you will lose your religious merit as well! Therefore, O Brahmin, refrain from committing the sin whose fear makes you always enter this water. Why do you unnecessarily make your body suffer from this cold?'*

This advice from Punnika pleased the Brahmin. He came to her with a cloth and said, 'Venerable Punnika, you have turned me away from the wrong path and towards the right path. That is why I offer you this cloth.'

Punnika said:

*'O Brahmin, keep the cloth yourself. I do not want it. If you fear and dislike suffering, do not commit a sin either in solitude or in the presence of others. If you commit a sin now or in future, you will not escape suffering, no matter where you run. If you fear and dislike suffering, take refuge in the Buddha, take refuge in the Dhamma, and take refuge in the Sangha. Observe the rules of Good Conduct. This alone will benefit you.'*

The Brahmin became a follower of the Buddha because of this teaching. Later he became a great sadhu and said:

*'Formerly I was a Brahmin only in name, but now I am a true Brahmin—because now I am trai-vidya (I have understood the three types of learning expounded by the Buddha), learned in the Vedas (i.e. endowed with learning), a purohit or priest (i.e. enjoying well-being), and a snaataka (liberated)!'*

#### 4. The Sangha: Part II<sup>33</sup>

Already during the lifetime of Lord Buddha, his Dhamma had spread throughout the Middle Region.<sup>34</sup> The Buddhist monks propagated the Dhamma especially through dialogue; they did not hold meetings and deliver lectures, as is done today. They preached to the people interested in listening to religious counsel wherever they met them—singly or together. Their behaviour towards the people is well illustrated by the following story about the monk Purna.

There was a disciple of the Buddha, named Purna. One day he went to Lord Buddha and requested him for religious teaching in brief. After imparting it, Lord Buddha asked him, 'O Purna, to which region do you intend to travel now?'

Purna: 'Lord, having received your teaching, I intend to travel to a region named Sunaaparanta.'

<sup>33</sup> This part has been added to the original lectures with the objective of presenting to the readers, in brief, information about the Sangha from the time of Lord Buddha's Parinirvana to the reign of King Ashoka.

<sup>34</sup> The region bounded by Bhagalpur in the east, Gandhara in the west, the Himalayas in the north, and the Vindhya Mountains in the south, was known as the Middle Region.



Buddha: 'O Purna, the people of Sunaaparanta are very hard-hearted and cruel. What would you feel if they curse and revile you?'

Purna: 'Lord, I would feel that these people are very good because they did not beat me with their hands.'

Buddha: 'And if they beat you with their hands?'

Purna: 'I would consider the people very good because they did not hit me with stones.'

Buddha: 'And if they hit you with stones?'

Purna: 'I would feel that the people are very good because they did not hit me with sticks.'

Buddha: 'And if they hit you with sticks?'

Purna: 'I would regard it as their goodness that they did not attack me with weapons.'

Buddha: 'And if they attack you with weapons?'

Purna: 'I would deem it their goodness that they did not kill me.'

Buddha: 'And if they kill you?'

Purna: 'Lord, many monks get weary of the body and kill themselves. If the residents of Sunaaparanta destroy such a body, they will do me a great service. Therefore I would think of them as very good people.'

Buddha: 'Bravo, Purna, Bravo! Being thus filled with tranquillity, you would be capable of preaching in the region of Sunaaparanta.'—*Majjhima Nikaya*

At the time of Lord Buddha's Parinirvana, the only one of his chief disciples, such as Sariputta and Moggallana, who was still living was Maha-Kashyapa. The former stage of his life is very illuminating, therefore it would not be inappropriate to recount it briefly. His name in the former stage of life was Pippali [Pishphali in Sanskrit]; he was known as Kashyapa because of his gotra. Because he was one of the chief disciples of the Buddha, he was called Maha-Kashyapa [Kashyapa the Great]. He was born in an affluent Brahmin family in a Brahmin village known as Maha-tirtha, located in Magadha-desh. When he completed twenty years of age, his parents decided to arrange his marriage. But Pippali did not wish to be tied by the bonds of marriage. When he told his mother this, she became very unhappy. Ultimately he agreed to marry at the insistence of his mother.

At that time, in the city of Shagala in Madra-desh, a wealthy Brahmin of the Kaushika gotra had a beautiful sixteen-year-old daughter

named Bhadraa [Bhaddaa in Pali] Kaapilani. Pippali's parents decided to marry him to her. As soon as Pippali heard the news, he wrote to her, 'O Bhadraa, choose for yourself another husband who is suitable in terms of your caste, gotra, and wealth. I am going to renounce my home some time or other, and become a sanyasi. I am writing this so that you should not have any regrets later on.'

Bhadraa also wanted to become a nun, therefore she also wrote a similar letter to Pippali. But their relatives intercepted and tore up these letters, and gave them fake letters instead. Naturally, the two were compelled to marry against their wishes. But even after marriage, the two continued to observe celibacy. Pippali left home after his parents' death and became the Buddha's disciple. Bhadraa Kaapilani also entered the Sangha of nuns after him.<sup>35</sup> Later, on attaining Arhatship [state of perfection], Bhadraa said:

*'We both underwent initiation when we found domestic life to be blemished. We are now subdued and tranquil, our passions have waned, and we have attained Nirvana!'*—*Therigatha Chatukka Nipata*

On the seventh day after the Parinirvana of Lord Buddha, Maha-Kashyapa had started out for Kushinara from Pava, along with five hundred monks. On the way he heard the news of the Buddha's demise from a wandering religious mendicant of the Ajivaka sect. At this news, the monks who had not yet attained Arhatship were filled with deep sorrow. Maha-Kashyapa said to them, 'Friends, do not grieve. Did the Lord not tell us that we would have to be separated from all dear things some time or other? It can never be that what has been created is not destroyed.'

There was in this Sangha a monk named Subhadra who had become a monk in his old age.<sup>36</sup> He said, 'Friends, do not grieve. We have been freed from the clutches of the Maha-shramana (the Buddha). He troubled us by telling us to do this and not to do that. But now we can behave as we wish.' Hearing the monk's words, Maha-Kashyapa said

<sup>35</sup> This anecdote is taken from a text entitled *Manoratha-puranai (Angutara Nikaya Atthakatha)* by Acharya Buddhaghosha. It is not found in the *Tripitaka*.

<sup>36</sup> This Subhadra was different from the Subhadra who was the Buddha's last disciple.

to the Sangha, 'Friends, let us now compile "Dhamma" and "Vinaya", because their absence would strengthen the monks (like Subhadra) who do not believe in the Dhamma and weaken the monks who do'.<sup>37</sup>

Thereupon the monks requested Maha-Kashyapa to select monks capable of compiling 'Dhamma' and 'Vinaya'. Accordingly, Maha-Kashyapa selected 499 monks who had reached Arhatship. The long-lived Ananda had not yet reached Arhatship at the time. Even so, the monks said to Maha-Kashyapa, 'Sir, although the long-lived Ananda is not an Arhat, he would never follow the wrong path through predilection [*chhanda*], hatred, fear, and ignorance. Also, he has studied a great deal of "Dhamma" and "Vinaya" with the Lord. Therefore we request you to select him as well.' Maha-Kashyapa acceded to the monks' request and selected Ananda. All these select monks decided to spend the four rainy months at Rajagriha; accordingly they went to Rajagriha and compiled 'Dhamma' and 'Vinaya'. On the eve of the day that the compilation of 'Dhamma' began, Ananda attained Arhatship. Maha-Kashyapa was the head of this Sangha. He consulted Upali about 'Vinaya', and Ananda about 'Dhamma'. They both recounted everything they remembered. All this was compiled in the form of *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* [texts], with the consent of all. Thus the work of the First Council [*sangiti*] was completed.

A hundred years after the Buddha's Parinirvana, the Second Council was held in the city of Vaishali, at the vihara known as Valikarama. The Vajjiputtaka [Vajri-putraka in Sanskrit] monks of Vaishali began to propound ten things which contravened Vinaya; chief among them was that monks are allowed to accept gold and silver. On one *uposatha* day, these monks kept a bell-metal plate filled with water at the spot where the Sangha sat, and counselled the lay followers to help them with money. There was a monk named Kaakandaka-putra Yasha there, who did not like this act of the monks. He protested against it right then and there. But ignoring his protest, the lay followers gave the Sangha a great deal of money. The following day the monks divided the money and gave Yasha his share. But Yasha did not take it. What is more, he went into the city of Vaishali, gathered together the lay followers, and explained to them that the Dhamma taught by the

<sup>37</sup> 'Dhamma' means the teaching of the Buddha, and 'Vinaya' means the rules of the Sangha of monks.

Buddha forbade monks to accept money. On hearing this news, the monks decided to excommunicate Yasha. Yasha was not likely to get a majority on his side in Vaishali; therefore he went immediately to the city of Kaushambi and sent a man to convey this news to the monks of the city of Pava and of the region of Avanti.

At the time there was a renowned monk named Sambhuta who lived on the mountain Ahoganga. That is where sixty monks of Pava and eighty-eight monks of Avanti gathered together on Yasha's invitation. They all decided to make the monk Revata [Raivata in Sanskrit], who lived in the region of Soreyya, the leader of their faction. When Revata heard the news, he left his dwelling place and went away, because he did not want leadership. The monks followed him to his [new] place. After wandering about four to five times in this fashion, they caught up with him and made him their leader. When the Vajji-puttaka monks heard of this, they tried to win Revata over to their faction, but without success.

Then all these monks went to Vaishali with the intention of settling the dispute right where it had arisen. In Vaishali lived an aged monk named Sarvakaami, a friend of Ananda (whom Maha-Kashyapa had consulted about 'Dhamma'). He also was asked by the monks to help in settling the dispute. All the monks gathered together. But the situation was such that one faction would say one thing and the other faction something else. The dispute could not be settled. Thereupon they selected four monks from either faction and decided that they should settle the dispute through a majority vote. The Vajji-puttakas selected Sarvakami, Salha, Khujja-sobhita and Vasabhagamika; the monks of Pava, etc. selected Revata, Sambhuta, Yasha, and Sumana. These eight came together in the Valikaaraam vihara and decided the dispute in Yasha's favour. Thus the work of the Second Council was completed.

An account of the First and Second Councils is found in *Chulla-vagga* of the *Tripitaka*. But a description of the Third Council is not found in the *Tripitaka*; it is given at the beginning of a text known as *Samanta-paasaadikaa* (in *Vinaya Atthakatha*) by Acharya Buddhaghosha. There is a great difference of opinion about its authenticity among Western scholars. However, it is beyond doubt that the Third Council was held during King Ashoka's reign.

That Ashoka sent Buddhist preachers to distant lands is supported

by his rock edicts.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the edict on the stone pillar at Sarnath (near Kashi) contains words to the effect that monks of bad conduct would be given white clothing and dismissed from the Sangha. It would therefore not be surprising if Ashoka organized a council in order to dispatch preachers and identify monks of bad conduct. Texts such as *Mahavamsa* mention that Moggali-putta Tissa was the president of the Third Council. It is said that he was the author of the chapter entitled *Katha-vatthu* in *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. There is a reference in *Mahavamsa* that after the work of the [Third] Council was completed, he sent monks to various countries. It is as follows:

After the work of the Council was completed, the Venerable Moggali-putta (Tissa) who propagated Buddhism—thinking of the future and taking into account the fact that the prestige of Buddhism would grow outside the Middle Region—sent the following *sthaviras* to the respective places in the month of Kartik:<sup>39</sup>

(He) sent the Venerable Majjhantika to the regions of Kashmir and Gandhara, and the Venerable Mahadeva to Mahisha-mandala.

(He) sent the Venerable Rakkhita to Vanavasi, and the Venerable Yonadhamma-rakkhita to Aparantaka.

(He) sent the Venerable Maha-dhamma-rakkhita to Maharashtra-desh, and the Venerable Maha-rakkhita to the region of Yavana-loka.

(He) sent the Venerable Majjhima to the region of the Himalayas, and the two *sthaviras* Sona and Uttara to Suvarna-bhumi (Burma?).

(He) said, 'Go and establish the Buddha's pleasing Religion in the lovely Lanka-dvipa', and sent his five friends, the Venerable Maha-Mahinda,<sup>40</sup> Itthiya, Uttiya, Sambala, and Bhaddasaala there.

It is doubtful that Burma was known as Suvarna-bhumi. Nor has it been discovered where the regions of Aparanta, etc. were located.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> See [my] article, 'Selections from Ashoka's Rock Edicts' in the Diwali Issue of *Manoranjan*.

<sup>39</sup> *Sthavira* means aged. A monk is called *sthavira* after he has completed ten years in the Sangha. [In English, a *sthavira* is referred to as 'Venerable'.—M.K.]

<sup>40</sup> Maha-Mahendra was the son of King Ashoka. He and his sister Sanghamitra entered the Sangha and established Buddhism in Ceylon.

<sup>41</sup> Aparanta has since been identified as the coastal Konkan region in western India.—M.K.

Of the above-mentioned places, only in Lanka-dvipa and Himalaya does Buddhism exist today. But in countries like Nepal and Tibet the Buddhist tradition has not survived since the time of Ashoka. At one time Buddhism died down in these countries, and after a period, the Mahayana sect was propagated here.<sup>42</sup> At present, the tradition of the Ashokan time continues only in the southern countries like Lanka (Sinhala), Burma, Siam [or Thailand], and Cambodia. For one thing, all the religious texts in these countries are in Pali, and [for another] this sect does not include deities such as Vajrapani and Tara.<sup>43</sup> Therefore it is best that whoever wants to obtain information about ancient Buddhism or the Sangha acquires knowledge of the Buddhist texts in Pali.

## 5. Appendices

### I. Sigala-sutta in Translation<sup>44</sup>

When Lord Buddha lived in Veluvana in the city of Rajagriha, there was a householder's son named Sigala [Shrigala in Sanskrit] who would get up early in the morning, have his bath, and worship the six directions—East, West, North, South, Upward and Downward—in his wet clothes. One day when Lord Buddha was on his way from Veluvana to the city of Rajagriha to beg for food, he saw Sigala and asked, 'O son of a Grihapati, you are doing namaskar to the six directions with your clothes and hair still wet. What is this for?' Sigala answered, 'Lord, my father told me when he was about to die, "Child, worship the [six] directions." Accordingly, I am conducting this rite in order to honour his advice.'

Upon hearing this, the Buddha said, 'O son of a Grihapati, according to the Ariya Dhamma [Arya Dharma or Noble Religion], the worship of the six directions is a very different rite.'

<sup>42</sup> The Buddhists in the north belong to the Mahayana sect, which probably originated in the second century BC.

<sup>43</sup> Deities such as Vajrapani, Tara, and Avalokiteshwara have gained a great deal of importance in the Mahayana sect. All the Mahayana texts have been written in Sanskrit, some even in incorrect Sanskrit.

<sup>44</sup> *Sigala-sutta* is one of the 34 sutras of the Pali text entitled *Digha Nikaya*. [This English translation is based on the Marathi translation given in the original.—M.K.]

Sigala then requested the Buddha to explain the rite according to the Noble Dhamma and the Buddha preached to him as follows:

Whoever wishes to worship the six directions should give up the four bad actions. He should refrain from committing a sin for four reasons. He should not resort to the six gates to a loss of wealth. Only a person who abandons these fourteen things and then worships the six directions wins this world and the next.

The four bad actions are: killing a creature, stealing, adultery, and telling a lie.

The four reasons for which he should refrain from committing a sin are: an unjustifiable predilection that it feels good, hatred for others, ignorance, and fear of another.

*If a person transgresses the Dhamma out of predilection, hatred, ignorance, or fear, his success wanes like the moon in the dark fortnight.*

*If a person does not transgress the Dhamma because of predilection, hatred, ignorance, or fear, his success waxes like the moon in the bright fortnight.*

Now I shall describe the six gates to a loss of wealth: (1) imbibing intoxicants like liquor, (2) wandering about at any time, (3) addiction to plays and *tamashas* [vulgar theatrical performances], (4) gambling, (5) company of sinners, and (6) sloth. One should not resort to these six gates to a loss of wealth.

O son of a Grihapati, liquor destroys wealth, increases quarrels, is a home of diseases, is the mother of bad reputation, destroys all sense of shame, and weakens wisdom. One who gets addicted to liquor soon destroys himself.

A person who forms a habit of wandering about at the wrong time is unable to protect himself, or his family, or his wealth. He is filled with suspicion day and night; he gets used to telling lies; and he brings many calamities upon himself.

A person who gets addicted to plays and *tamashas* goes about making inquiries where there is a performance of dance, or music, or *tamasha* that day, and has no time at all for household tasks.

If a gambler wins money on gambling, he also incurs the enmity of others; if he loses money, he keeps on grieving. No one believes

a gambler's word. Friends and relatives feel contempt for him. No one gives a young gambler his daughter in marriage, thinking that he would not be able to maintain a wife.

A person who starts keeping company with sinners gets successively into the company of gamblers, drunks, thieves, rogues, etc.; and such friends lead to his ruin.

A lazy person stops work saying, 'It is very cold today,' or 'It is too hot today,' or 'It is too late in the evening,' or 'I am very hungry today,' or 'I am very tired today.' Because of such sloth, he is not able to earn anything, but loses the wealth he already has.

*Wealth leaves young men who give up work because of severe cold, severe heat, or lateness of the hour.*

But:

*A person who attaches no greater importance to the cold or heat than he does to a blade of grass, and who continues to be ever industrious, does not lose happiness.*

O son of a Grihapati, you should consider the following four to be your ill-wishers and avoid them from a distance, as you would a difficult path: (1) He who takes something or the other when he visits your house, (2) He who offers help only through words, (3) He who is obsequious, and (4) He who helps you in sinful acts. The following four should be regarded as true friends and nurtured, just as a mother nurtures her son: (1) He who is benevolent, (2) He who shares your joys and sorrows, (3) He who gives right counsel, and (4) He who is compassionate.

O son of a Grihapati, after completing this preparation, a young man should start worshipping the six directions. Let me tell you which these six directions are. The parents should be regarded as the East, the guru should be regarded as the South, the wife should be regarded as the West, and friends and relatives as the North; servants should be regarded as the Downward direction, and *shramanas* and Brahmins, that is, holy men, should be regarded as the Upward direction.

The East, that is, the parents, should be worshipped in five ways: (1) They should be served, (2) They should be maintained, (3) The

family tradition of good deeds should be continued, (4) They should be obeyed and their wealth should be shared, and (5) If either of them has passed away, charity should be given in their name. If parents are worshipped in these five ways, they favour the son in the following five ways: (1) They protect the son from sin, (2) They lead the son on the beneficial path, (3) They teach the son arts and crafts, (4) They get a suitable bride for him, and (5) They pass on their property to the son at an appropriate time. Thus worship of the East leads to one's welfare.

A disciple should worship the South, that is, the guru, in five ways: (1) Stand up when the guru approaches, (2) Nurse him if he falls ill, (3) Faithfully grasp what he teaches, (4) Serve him when necessary, and (5) Learn well what he teaches. If a disciple serves a guru in these five ways, he favours the disciple in the following five ways: (1) Teach the disciple good conduct, (2) Teach him arts and crafts well, (3) Pass on all their knowledge to the disciple, (4) Praise the disciple to their friends and relatives, and (5) Give him an education which helps him to earn a living wherever he goes. Thus a disciple's five-fold worship of his guru yields a five-fold fruit.

O son of a Grihapati, a husband should worship the West, that is, the wife, in five ways: (1) Honour her, (2) Never insult her in any way, (3) Never have relations with another woman (i.e. be monogamous), (4) Hand over the management of the household to her, and (5) Provide her with adequate clothing. If a husband worships his wife in these five ways, she benefits him in five ways: (1) She keeps an excellent house, (2) She treats servants with affection, (3) She becomes a devoted wife [*pativrata*], (4) She preserves the wealth earned by her husband (and does not squander it), and (5) She is industrious and alert in all household tasks. Thus, if a husband worships the West, that is, his wife, it yields happiness.

O son of a Grihapati, a householder should worship the North, that is, his friends and relatives, in five ways: (1) He should give them whatever is worth giving, (2) He should speak sweetly to them if they visit his house, (3) He should help them if necessary, (4) He should treat them on par with himself (that is, he should not consider them to be inferior and insult them during weddings and other family functions, or on other occasions), and (5) He should be without deceit in his behaviour towards them. If a householder worships the North, that is, friends and relatives, in these five ways, they prove to be bene-

volent to him in five ways: (1) They protect him if a calamity befalls him unawares, (2) They also protect his wealth on such occasions, (3) They give him moral support when he is frightened by calamity, (4) They do not desert him in adversity, and (5) They are also benevolent towards his progeny. In this manner the North proves to be beneficial to the householder.

O son of a Grihapati, a master should worship the Downward direction, that is, the servants, in five ways: (1) Give them the kind of work that they are capable of, (2) Pay them suitable wages, (3) Nurse them if they fall ill, (4) Offer them good food frequently, and (5) Reward them for good service. If a master worships the Lower direction, that is, the servants, in these five ways, they benefit him in five ways: (1) They get up before the master does, (2) They go to sleep after the master does, (3) They do not steal from the master, (4) They give excellent service, and (5) They spread the master's fame all around. Thus, worship of the Downward direction leads to happiness.

O son of a Grihapati, in five ways should a householder worship the Upward direction, that is, holy men: (1) He should honour them with his body, (2) He should honour them with his speech, (3) He should honour them with his mind, (4) He should give them whatever they need, and (5) He should not obstruct them when they come to beg for food. If a householder worships the Upward direction, that is, holy men, in these five ways, they benefit him in five ways: (1) They protect him from sin, (2) They lead him on a good path, (3) They favour him with affection, (4) They teach him religion well, and (5) They remove his doubts and satisfy him. Thus worship of the Upward direction proves beneficial to a householder.

O son of a Grihapati, sacred gifts, sweet words, helping others, and treating others as equals are the four means of gathering people unto oneself. A person would not honour his parents only because they gave birth to him, if they did not possess these. Only he who finds these four means becomes successful in worldly life.<sup>45</sup>

This teaching of the Buddha made Sigala very happy, and he became a lay follower of the Buddha ever since.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> This [Marathi] translation of *Sigala-sutta* had appeared in *Manoranjan* of April 1909. It is reproduced here with permission from the editors.

## II. *The Five Factors, Arhatship, and Nirvana*

### The Five Factors [*Pancha-skandha*]

Form [*rupa*], sensation [*vedanaa*], perception [*sandhya*], propensities [*sanskara*] and consciousness [*vidnyana*] are the Five Factors.

The Factor of Form means the four great Elements—Earth, Water, Light, and Air—and the things that arise from them.

The Factor of Sensation means the three types of sensations: pleasant, unpleasant, and indifferent.

The Factor of Perception means ideas about things such as a house, tree, village, etc. Things like a house or a tree are made out of the above-mentioned Four Elements and are therefore not different from one another; even so we recognize their difference because of our Factor of Perception. This mental capacity of giving them different names is known as the Factor of Perception.

Propensities mean mental propensities. These are classified into good, bad, and neutral. The good propensities are a desire to help others, love, alertness, etc. The bad propensities are greed, hatred, delusion, envy, sloth, etc. The neutral propensities are those that are neither good nor bad. For example, likes and dislikes for certain things arise as a result of former actions [*karma*] and are therefore not counted among good or bad propensities; they have been called neutral.

Consciousness means comprehension. It can briefly be classified into six types: consciousness arising from sight, hearing, smell, taste, body, and mind. These six types are together known as the Capacity for Consciousness. Consciousness is sometimes called the mind in Buddhist texts. But Buddhists regard the mind as abstract. Therefore it has to be remembered that the mind as mentioned in the books of Nyaya Shastra, such as *Tarka-sangraha*, and the mind as mentioned in Buddhist texts, are not the same.

If these Five Factors are characterized by desire, they are known as the Factors of Clinging to Existence [*upaadaana-skandha*] which cause rebirth. The good or bad action in this life leads to these Five Factors of Clinging to Existence in the next life. When such desire is totally eradicated, they are known only as Factors rather than Factors of Clinging to Existence, because they do not lead to rebirth. Such total eradication results from the attainment of Arhatship. A person who

has attained Arhatship retains his Five Factors until death, but loses his bad propensities as soon as he reaches the Arhat status. At the time of death, an Arhat's Five Factors dissolve into Nirvana; naturally, the Five Factors do not emerge out of them again.

### Arhatship

Arhatship means the realization of total Nirvana, and is attained by eliminating the ten bonds (*sanyojanas*) through a study of the Noble Eight-fold Path. These ten bonds are: (1) The view that the soul is a separate and permanent entity, (2) Doubt about or lack of faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, (3) The conviction that rites, such as sacred baths, alone would lead to salvation, (4) Sensual desire, (5) Anger, (6) Desire to attain Brahma-loka, (7) Desire to attain the world of formlessness, (8) Egoism, (9) Arrogance, and (10) Ignorance.

Persons who are on the path to Nirvana are classified into four stages: one who has 'Fallen in the stream', a Once-returner, a Never-returner, and an Arhat. A person has 'fallen in the stream' when he has eliminated the first three bonds. If he dies in this stage, he is reborn in the mortal and the godly world at the most seven times; during his seventh birth he is assured of salvation. A person is a 'once-returner' when he has eliminated the first three bonds and also weakened sensual desire, hatred, and ignorance. If he dies in this state, he is reborn in this world only once and attains salvation. A person becomes a 'never-returner' when he has eliminated the first five bonds. If he dies in this state, he is not reborn in this world; he is reborn in godly worlds, such as Brahma-loka, and attains salvation there. A person becomes an Arhat when he has eliminated all bonds; an Arhat has no rebirth. This is the person known as 'freed of rebirth'. There is a slight difference between a Buddha and an Arhat: a Buddha experiences Nirvana through his own efforts, an Arhat does so through the teaching of another. But they both attain salvation in this very life.

### Nirvana

There are many interpretations of Nirvana among Western scholars. Some say that Nirvana is Annihilation, nothing else. Others say that it is not likely that the large number of Buddhists would all worship Annihilation. During his lifetime, Lord Buddha was accused by his

opponents of having renounced all action, i.e. being an Annihilationist.

Once when asked about this by Sinha, the army commander of the Vajjis, he said, 'O Sinha, this accusation is correct in a sense. I approve of the renunciation or annihilation of all sinful acts. Therefore I may be called an Annihilationist. On the other hand, I may also be called a believer in action or a Realist, because I approve of acts that realize religious merit. I teach that such acts should be committed and carried to completion. Therefore I may be called a believer in action.'<sup>46</sup> This dialogue proves that the Buddha did not preach annihilation alone.

When a wandering religious mendicant named Jambu-khaadaka asked Sariputta what Nirvana is, Sariputta told him:

*'The elimination of greed, hatred, and ignorance is known as Nirvana.'*<sup>47</sup>

This means that Nirvana is experienced when the three non-meritorious propensities of greed, hatred, and ignorance are annihilated. If anyone asks, 'Which is the core of a piece of wood?', the appropriate answer would be, 'If you scrape away the bark and remove the soft pulp, what remains is the core.' Sariputta has given a similar reply to Jambu-khaadaka. Nirvana has been referred to by many epithets, but its detailed description is nowhere to be found. Nirvana cannot be described in the same way that a town can. Only a great sage who has annihilated greed, hatred, and ignorance from his heart, that is, who has eliminated desire, can experience Nirvana. Only such a person can know what it is.

*The great sages who have eliminated all desire say that Nirvana is a supreme state, it has no end, it is totally pure, and it is extraordinary.—Abhidharmarthasangraha*

The attainment of Arhatship gives an experience of Nirvana; but it does not totally annihilate all sorrow. Mental troubles arising out of greed, hatred, and ignorance disappear at that time, but bodily suffering remains till the end of life. The Buddha had experienced Nirvana at the age of thirty-six. At the time his mental suffering born of

<sup>46</sup> This dialogue occurs in the text *Maha-vagga*.

<sup>47</sup> *Jambu-khadaka Sanyutta, Sanyutta Nikaya*.

greed, hatred, and ignorance ceased, but his physical suffering arising from heat, cold, disease, etc. did not cease altogether. It ceased at the time of his death. The death of an Arhat is known as Parinirvana, because death also puts an end to his physical suffering. The state into which an Arhat passes after his Parinirvana is not described anywhere. It is an indescribable state. The Parinirvana of Lord Buddha is known as Maha-pari-nirvana.

### III. The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eight-fold Path

*Not having a proper understanding of the Four Noble Truths, I was born into various states of rebirth for a long time. But I have now understood these Truths, which has destroyed Craving, and thus totally destroyed the origin of suffering. Now there is no more rebirth.—Maha-parinibbana Sutta*

The Four Noble Truths are mentioned in various places in the *Tripitaka*. These may be called the foundation of Buddhism. It was these Four Noble Truths that Lord Buddha first preached to the five monks at Varanasi. I have presented this teaching at the end of the first lecture; it has been expounded in detail in various suttas. The authors of the *Atthakathas* have also commented upon it in detail. The description of the Four Noble Truths presented in the first lecture is very brief because it followed the *Dhamma-chakka-pavattana Sutta*. I am expanding a little upon that very brief description with the help of other suttas, so as to explain it properly to the readers.

#### Suffering

This is the first Noble Truth. A person should first understand that there is suffering in this world. If a person does not know what suffering is, he would find it difficult to turn to religion. It is the feeling that there is suffering in worldly life that makes people belonging to all religious sects turn towards spirituality. Which suffering is this? Birth is full of suffering, that is, a child brings along suffering when it is born. Old age is full of suffering; every living creature experiences suffering at the time of death. There are many occasions in life when one grieves; they are also full of suffering. Contact with things

or creatures one dislikes leads to suffering, and separation from the things and creatures that one likes also leads to suffering. If one desires a particular thing and does not obtain it, that also leads to suffering. In brief, the five Factors of Clinging to Existence (accompanied by desire) lead to suffering. In this manner a religious person should obtain knowledge of the Truth of Suffering.

### Origin of Suffering

What is the origin of all this suffering? Some say that suffering is characteristic of the soul; others say that suffering was probably caused by the Creator or by some individual different from us. But Lord Buddha says that suffering is not characteristic of the soul, nor has it been created by someone else. It arises because of the rule of cause and effect. Craving [*trishna*, or 'thirsting after'] exists, therefore suffering exists; if there is no craving, there is no suffering. Craving means lack of fulfilment. It is of three types: craving for sensual pleasure, craving for existence, and craving for non-existence.

Craving for sensual pleasure means craving for objects of enjoyment. It has added tremendously to suffering in the world. 'Craving for sensual pleasure makes Kshatriyas quarrel with Kshatriyas and Brahmins with Brahmins, fathers quarrel with sons and sons with fathers, relatives quarrel with relatives. All these quarrels result from seeking sensual pleasure.'<sup>48</sup> And even if a person quarrels and obtains a larger share of objects of enjoyment, it does not make him happy.

*The weak envy him; internal enemies—like sexual passion and anger—and external enemies—like fire and thieves—attack him. As a result, suffering enters his heart as water enters a leaking boat.*<sup>49</sup>

Craving for existence means craving for life; it also adds considerably to suffering in the world. Even if a person lives a hundred years, he is not contented; he wishes for happiness after death and for an immortal soul. Accordingly he undertakes sacred vows and fasts, he is prepared to make fire sacrifices and cause suffering to animals, and he thus adds to his own suffering and that of other creatures.

<sup>48</sup> *Maha-dukkha-kkhandasutta, Majjhima Nikaya.*

<sup>49</sup> *Kama-sutta, Sutta Nipata.*

Craving for non-existence means the desire for self-destruction, to vanish from this world. People who have succumbed to this craving disregard their own gain and that of others. They are ready to commit suicide for trifling reasons. They feel that the world would end when they die. A person who does not care for his own life will not care for the lives of others. Such people cannot feel any pity at all, no matter how much others suffer. Their life has lost all meaning. They have no interest at all in spiritual happiness. On the whole they add to their own suffering and that of others through their heartlessness and meaninglessness.

### Extinction of Suffering

This means understanding suffering and destroying it. This is rendered possible only by destroying craving. Suffering can be destroyed only if the three above-mentioned types of craving are destroyed; other means are useless. Suffering will not end if one attempts to fulfil sensual desire; or if one reaches heaven by undertaking sacred vows, fasts, and sacrifices; or even if one vanishes from this world.

### Path to the Extinction of Suffering

We now know that the extinction of craving leads to the extinction of suffering. But is there a means to achieve the extinction of craving? We know that if an object pierces the body, it hurts terribly. But what is the use if one does not know the means of removing this object safely? Therefore this Fourth Truth describes the means for extinguishing suffering, namely the Noble Eight-fold Path:

- (1) **Right Knowledge**, that is, knowledge of suffering, knowledge of the cause of suffering, knowledge of the extinction of suffering, and knowledge of the path to the extinction of suffering. The term Right Knowledge can also be applied to the right understanding that the world is impermanent, that is, subject to change; that worldly life is full of suffering; and that the soul is not an indestructible and unchangeable entity, but subject to change according to action. This understanding alone enables one to comprehend the Four Noble Truths.



- (2) **Right Resolve** is a term applied to the three resolves—a liking for solitude, pure love for all creatures, and a wish to avoid trouble for oneself and others.
- (3) **Right Speech** means not telling a lie, not slandering, not speaking harsh words, and not uttering meaningless words.
- (4) **Right Action** (karma) means not taking life, not stealing, and not committing adultery.
- (5) **Right Living** is to earn one's living by rightful means, without resorting to the wrong path.
- (6) **Right Effort** is a term applied to the attempt not to allow bad thoughts to arise in one's mind and destroying the bad thoughts that have arisen, and the attempt to arouse good thoughts in one's mind and expanding and carrying to perfection those good thoughts that have already arisen.
- (7) **Right Thought** means keeping the mind alert in the following four ways: being constantly aware that the body is made up of impure substances, frequently observing the happy and unhappy sensations in the body, observing one's mind, and thinking upon philosophical things like the chain of cause and effect.
- (8) **Right Samadhi**: By extinguishing all sensual passions and other evil tendencies, a yogi attains the first level of meditation that is filled with reflection and thought, and with love and happiness born of detachment. Then he attains the second level of meditation which is filled with cheerfulness and concentration of the mind resulting from a calming down of reflection and thought, which is free from reflection and thought, and which is replete with love and happiness born of samadhi. By abandoning love he achieves indifference and awakening, and experiences the happiness of samadhi. Noble [arya] people call such a person filled with indifference and alertness, and therefore happy. Thus he achieves the third level of meditation. Having already eliminated good and bad moods and having destroyed happiness and unhappiness, he attains the fourth level of meditation which is free from happiness and unhappiness, and is purified by a state of indifference

and awakening. The attainment of these four levels of samadhi is known as Right Samadhi.<sup>50</sup>

The Buddha has called this Noble Eight-fold Path 'the Middle Path'. Each of its elements is located midway between the two extremes. For example, pleasure-seekers believe in eating, drinking, and making merry. This view is one extreme. Ascetics believe in purification through sacred vows, austerities, and mortification of the body. This view is the other extreme. The first view promotes the pursuit of pleasure and the second self-mortification. The path located midway between these two is a proper understanding of the Four Noble Truths. Pleasure-seekers encourage all kinds of resolve; ascetics insist on the total eradication of all resolve. The middle path between these two extremes is the right resolve. Similarly the other elements should also be understood as located in the middle.

#### IV. *The Tripitaka Texts*

The *Tripitaka* is the principal text in Pali. It is three times the length of the *Mahabharata*, that is, the number of its books is about 3,00,000. Its three main divisions are: *Sutta Pitaka*, *Vinaya Pitaka*, and *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. Their subdivisions are as follows:

##### *Sutta Pitaka*

- (1) *Digha Nikaya*
- (2) *Majjhima Nikaya*
- (3) *Samyutta Nikaya*
- (4) *Anguttara Nikaya*
- (5) *Khuddaka Nikaya*

These are the five principal divisions of *Sutta Pitaka*. Of these, *Khuddaka Nikaya* has further fifteen subdivisions as follows:

- (1) *Khuddaka-patha*
- (2) *Dhamma-pada*

<sup>50</sup> The means for attaining these meditations are explained in the second lecture.

- (3) *Udaana*
- (4) *Itivuttaka*
- (5) *Sutta Nipata*
- (6) *Vimana-vatthu*
- (7) *Peta-vatthu*
- (8) *Thera-gatha*
- (9) *Theri-gatha*
- (10) *Jataka*
- (11) *Niddesa*
- (12) *Patisambhida-magga*
- (13) *Apadaana*
- (14) *Buddha-vamsa*
- (15) *Chariyaa Pitaka*

*Vinaya Pitaka* has five sub-divisions as follows:

- (1) *Paaraajikaa*
- (2) *Paachittiyaadi*
- (3) *Maha-vagga*
- (4) *Chulla-vagga*
- (5) *Parivara-patha*

*Abhidhamma Pitaka* has the following seven sections:

- (1) *Dhamma-sangani*
- (2) *Vibhanga*
- (3) *Dhaatu-katha*
- (4) *Puggala-pannyati*
- (5) *Katha-vatthu*
- (6) *Yamaka*
- (7) *Patthaana*

There were commentaries on the *Tripitaka* written in Sinhalese, known as *Atthakatha* (Artha-katha). At the beginning of the fifth century BC, Acharya Buddhaghosha had translated these *Atthakathas* into Pali. The following verses are found in the introduction at the beginning of the *Attha-kathas* on the four *Nikayas* including *Digha Nikaya*:

*This Attha-katha was brought to Sinhala-dvipa by Maha-Mahinda, and written down in the Sinhala language for the benefit of the people of [this] island. [I] now transfer it from the Sinhala language and put it into the Pali language which is pleasing, suited to the scripture, and faultless.*

The names of the *Atthakathas* are as follows:

- (1) *Digha Nikaya Atthakatha: Sumangala-vilasini*
- (2) *Majjhima Nikaya Atthakatha: Papancha-sudani*
- (3) *Samyutta Nikaya Atthakatha: Saarattha-ppakasini*
- (4) *Anguttara Nikaya Atthakatha: Manoratha-purani*
- (5) *Vinaya Atthakatha: Samanta-paasaadikaa*
- (6) *Dhamma-sangani Atthakatha: Attha-saalini*
- (7) *Vibhanga Atthakatha: Sammoha-vinodini*
- (8) *Pancha-ppakarana Atthakatha*, that is, *Atthakatha* of the five sections: *Dhatu-katha*, *Puggala-pannyati*, *Katha-vatthu*, *Yamaka*, and *Patthaana*.

The *Atthakathas* of the sections of *Khuddaka Nikaya* have been written by different *acharyas*.

*Sutta Pitaka* is primarily a collection of the teachings of the Buddha and his chief disciples. *Vinaya Pitaka* is a collection of the rules to be observed by monks. And *Abhidhamma Pitaka* considers the Buddhist philosophy in detail.

## 5

### Ancient Indian Republics, the Buddhist Sangha, and Socialism, 1910<sup>1</sup>

To the Editor, *Kesari*,

Sir,

In your editorial of 2<sup>nd</sup> August [1910], you have made the statement: 'In neither of these religious books (the *Quran* and the *Bible*), is there any mention of a representative political system. There is no published proof that it existed in Buddhism or the Parsi religion [i.e. Zoroastrianism].'

Your claim that there is no published proof of a representative political system in Buddhism is not correct. Professor Rhys Davids has provided, in the second chapter of his book *Buddhist India*, information about a total of ten republics or oligarchies during the Buddhist period.<sup>2</sup> The Shakya state in which the Buddha was born was also a republic. Among all these republics, that of the Vajjis was the strongest.<sup>3</sup>

The state of the Vajjis lay to the north of Pataliputra (Patna). Information about its boundaries, etc. is available in *Buddhist India*. Here I present a little information not found in the above book.

<sup>1</sup> This letter to the editor was published in *Kesari* on 25 October 1910 under the rubric '*Vajjinche Mahajanassattaak Rajya*' (The Oligarchic Kingdom of the Vajjis).—M.K.

<sup>2</sup> T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1997 (1903). Later, Dharmanand Kosambi himself wrote in detail about these sixteen republics on the basis of Buddhist texts, in his *Bhagavan Bauddha: Purvardha* (1940), pp. 23–53.—M.K.

<sup>3</sup> The Vajjis included eight confederate clans of whom the Videhas of Mithila and the Lichchhavis of Vaishali were the most important. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 22–6.—M.K.

At the beginning of *Maha-parinirvana-sutra*, there is a dialogue between the chief minister of King Ajatashatru and the Buddha which shows that once when Lord Buddha lived in the city of Vaishali (the capital of the Vajjis), he had laid down the following seven rules for the growth of the Vajjis:

1. Assemble together frequently and discuss political matters.
2. Come together with one mind, undertake political acts with one mind, and leave the assembly with one mind.
3. Do not pretend that a non-existent law exists, do not break an existing law, and follow a law that has been made earlier.
4. Respect elder statesmen, honour them, and listen to their advice.
5. Ensure that no respectable woman or unmarried girl is molested.
6. Take proper care of old religious sites.
7. Make arrangements to ensure that the religious practices of Arhats (Mahatmas or Great Souls) who may be visiting are not disturbed.

King Ajatashatru of Magadha was excessively ambitious, like the German Kaiser. For years he considered conquering the Vajjis; but this was not an easy task. Once he sent his chief minister, Vassakar [Vassakaar] the Brahmin, to Lord Buddha when the latter lived in his capital (the city of Rajagriha), in order to hear his views about attacking the Vajjis.

Vassakar the Brahmin politely conveyed his master's wish to Lord Buddha, whereupon the latter turned to [his disciple] Ananda and asked him whether the Vajjis followed the seven rules he had laid down. When Ananda answered in the affirmative, Lord Buddha said to Vassakar the Brahmin, 'O Brahmin, as long as the Vajjis observe the seven rules I have laid down, they will continue to flourish, and will not suffer a loss. During this time they will remain unconquerable.'

In *Maha-parinirvana-sutra*, the Buddha has compared the assembly of the Vajjis to the assembly of the gods. In another place Lord Buddha says:

O monks, these days the Vajjis are cautious and alert in their behaviour; they sleep on wooden pillows; they conduct themselves in accordance with the saying 'husk for one's hunger and a stone for one's sleep'; that

is why King Ajatashatru cannot defeat them. But when, in future, the Vajjis turn delicate, and have tender hands and feet; and when they [begin to] lie a-bed until sunrise, using expensive mattresses and pillows—that is when King Ajatashatru of Magadha will be able to defeat them. (*Samyutta Nikaya*)

The above discussion clearly shows what respect Lord Buddha felt for the state of the Vajjis. The Buddha never showed respect for monarchy, even though Prasenjit, king of Kosala, was his disciple.

The structure of the Sangha of monks—through which the Buddha conducted the task of uplifting the people—was based upon the principle of collective ownership which is the highest stage of democracy. And in Burma the Buddhist Sangha still observes this principle.

Those who propound the principle of collective ownership are known as 'socialists' in this country [the USA] and in Europe. Their numbers are increasing in the parliaments of the three countries of Germany, France, and England, and so is their influence in the parliaments of other European countries as well. Good men like Count Leo Tolstoy fully support the principle of socialism both through the words of Christ and through their own behaviour. Therefore it does not seem altogether wrong to surmise that this principle alone shall prevail in future.

A number of books have been, and are being, published in Western countries about socialism or the principle of collective ownership. This is not the place to discuss its pros and cons. I only wish to briefly say that the chief principle of socialism is 'to establish national ownership over privately owned property, and to induce all citizens to work in a manner conducive to the collective good without falling prey to the temptation of personal gain under the guise of trade or anything else.'

Two and a half millennia ago, the Buddha had applied this principle to his Sangha, and his Sangha followed it at least for a few centuries, which is creditable not only to him but also to the country—India—where the Sangha was established. A Buddhist monk possessed only the eight items described in the following verse:

*A monk who is on the path of Yoga should have eight items—three robes (a monk's clothing), a begging bowl, a small hatchet, a needle, a girdle, and a cloth for straining water.*

But other things, such as viharas and other residences for monks, were owned not by individual monks, but by the whole Sangha. Even if a householder donated a vihara to a particular monk, it was the Sangha which owned it; and the Sangha also had the power to evict the monk if it had reason to suspect his conduct.

If a monk committed an offence, he was tried by the whole Sangha assembled together. No decision could be reached unless at least twenty monks in the Sangha were assembled together. In a country [i.e. region] which had a low number of monks, ten monks would assemble together to carry on the working of the Sangha, and frequently a group of five monks would be delegated the power to decide minor matters unanimously.

It seems unlikely that the Buddha would have structured his Sangha on the above principle had he not been born in a republic, and had the Vajjis and other republics not flourished. At the most he would have established a *Gaadi* [throne] or a *Peeth* like the Mahants and royal sanyasis of today, and relegated to a succession of disciples the power to run it. This will clearly explain how the prevailing conditions of the people exerted a favourable influence on the Buddha's liberal and religious mind since childhood.

In conclusion, my only request to my compatriots is that they should not hasten to pronounce their opinion about the ancient history of India without reading the English translations of Buddhist books in Pali—even if they are not able to read the originals—and without reading useful books like *Buddhist India*. National College of Calcutta has made Pali a compulsory subject for students of Indian history. The reason is that Indian students should not be content with the knowledge derived from books written by European scholars, but should add their own discoveries to the ancient history of India through an acquaintance with original texts. This will clearly show our compatriots how helpful an acquaintance with the Buddhist Sangha is to the knowledge of history.

Yours,  
Dharmanand Kosambi

Cambridge, Mass., USA  
19<sup>th</sup> September 1910

## 6

# Measures for Improving the Conditions of Indian Workers, 1910<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

*He who befriends the oppressed and the sufferers should be recognized  
as a sadhu; in him should God be seen. [—Tukaram]*

Everyone will admit that food shortages and ignorance have made the condition of Indian workers increasingly difficult. A rise in agricultural taxes, coupled with drought, has made it harder for them to subsist on agriculture. Our farmers have no alternative but to escape to commercial cities such as Mumbai.

Yet it is not as if the plight of the working class comes to an end immediately upon their arrival in a city like Mumbai. Workers there may find enough to eat, but not the fresh air that is so plentiful in villages—not even if they were to pay a rent for it. As a result, many workers fall prey to dreadful diseases like the plague, and many are reduced to the state within which ‘*the body is exhausted after struggling with diseases one after another.*’ And moreover, living in crowded neighbourhoods and lacking proper education, they grow addicted to vices such as alcoholism.

The option of trying their luck in South Africa or other White colonies is not open to our workers. Even were we to hold meetings and

heap protests on White settlers, it seems unlikely that they would withdraw their policy of barring Asiatics. [But] I do not think they deserve the blame that our leaders attribute to them in this regard.

Last May, the congress of American workers held at Chicago passed by a majority a resolution—with only minor changes in the original draft resolution—that Asiatics should not be allowed to enter this country. The congress had appointed a committee to discuss the resolution. A majority of the committee members voted to stop all Asiatic workers coming here. Mr Spargo opposed this and wrote a separate report. After a discussion between the two factions, Mr Hillquit made some changes in the draft resolution and the congress passed it by a majority.<sup>2</sup>

The resolution presented by Mr Hillquit to the congress was that, in order to weaken workers’ organizations and lower the standard of living of American workers, American capitalists are bringing in from other countries a mass of workers who break strikes and work for contract wages. The American Federation of Labor completely supports laws that prevent the entry of such workers. The Federation opposes the idea that anyone should be prevented from entering on grounds of race or nationality. The Federation strongly demands that the United States should be a safe haven for all men and women who are oppressed by their governments on account of their race, religion, or politics.

The speeches that addressed this resolution are thought-provoking. The American Federation of Labor does not regard anyone as inferior on grounds of their country, colour, or creed; it regards every worker as being on par with other workers. But the Federation says that it is difficult for Asiatic workers to understand the principles of workers’ unions. Asiatic people do not possess organizational strength. Coming here, they allow capitalists to treat them as they wish, and this harms the workers who are here already. A feud is going on here between capitalists and workers; and workers here do not want Asiatic workers to intervene in this feud and hurt their interests.

This shows that our workers are barred from other countries not merely because they are born in India, but because of their ignorance

<sup>1</sup> This four-part article entitled ‘*Hindi Kamagaranchi Sthiti Sudharanyas Upaya*’ was described as ‘specially written for *Subodha Patrika* by Professor Dharmanand Kosambi from America’; *Subodha Patrika*, 23 October, 13 November, 20 November, and 4 December 1910.

<sup>2</sup> John Spargo and Morris Hillquit of New York were prominent socialists and were associated with the American Federation of Labor.

and lack of unity. A White agent collects people in India, loads them like sheep on a ship, and sends them to South Africa or Canada. There they are housed in tenement buildings a hundred times better than the chawls of Mumbai. But our people do not understand how to maintain a certain standard, and they do not care about cleanliness. They have no practical sense and allow their masters to dictate conditions. This allows the capitalists to lower the wages of native [i.e. American] workers. As a result, our workers are disliked not only by the workers here, but also by the middle class.

In America, tenement buildings are in the process of being demolished, and public bodies, such as municipalities, are building well-ventilated houses for workers. For fear of strikes capitalists are also paying increasing attention to the comforts of workers. In this situation, workers here may again be compelled back into the incarceration of tenement buildings because of the presence of Asiatic workers. How can these workers and their compatriots—other than the capitalists—accept this?

In sum, the condition of our workers is at present very regrettable. And our leaders, instead of blaming the White foreigners and their governments, need to start thinking immediately about how to absorb our workers within their own country. No matter how many resolutions they pass against the Government of Transvaal, these will prove as futile as weeping and wailing in a forest.

I think that if our government, our elected bodies such as municipalities, our wealthy people, and our leaders take an interest and exert themselves in this matter, our workers can be taken care of within the country. Let me promise to consider the matter, to the best of my ability, in the next articles and here take leave of my readers.

## 2. Duties of the Indian Government

It is generally known that the Government of India is especially concerned about the welfare of Indian workers. In order to prevent farmers' lands from being swallowed up by moneylenders, the Bombay Government passed the 'Restricted Tenure Act', even though many council members opposed it. The Hon'ble Governor-sahab said in his concluding speech at the last council meeting that this act has a very

beneficial effect. The Hon'ble Governor-sahab also promised that the agricultural tax would not be raised during his term of office. Lord Curzon-sahab too has not forgotten the poor peasant class. He did not hesitate to pass the All India Credit Co-operative Societies Act [of 1904] and contribute to the welfare of poor peasants.<sup>3</sup> The establishment of [co-operative societies] has helped the peasants a great deal, as shown by the report of the conference of credit co-operative societies held at Pune last July. In addition, the government seeks to provide irrigation by constructing canals in various provinces, and thus makes up the losses incurred by peasants on account of rainfall shortages.

Our peasants must certainly be eternally grateful for all these good deeds. But one must not think that this will put an end to the misery of our peasants and the working class in general. No matter how many laws the government enacts, it is becoming increasingly more difficult, day by day, to subsist on agriculture. Many peasants have no option but to make their way to commercial cities like Mumbai. The problems they face in such cities are beyond description. When trade flourishes, they earn wages sufficient to live on. But when trade slows down, they starve. The swadeshi movement earned Mumbai's merchants 200 per cent profits; what did the working class get? Wages barely enough to subsist on! But a few months ago, when trade slowed down, the mill-owners resolved to keep the mills closed on some days every week. Naturally, the workers were reduced to partial starvation! (And now some mills have closed down entirely.)

At the inaugural function of the Vishnu Mills at Solapur, the Hon'ble Governor advised the capitalists there to build well-ventilated chawls for the workers. If the capitalists follow this advice willingly, we can say that happy days are here not only for Indian workers but for all of India. But past experience does not suggest that capitalists pay heed to such advice. Had the wealthy elite of Mumbai taken adequate care of the workers off whose labour they earned profits, why would thousands have fallen prey to the plague?

Not even peasants who stay on in villages—rather than rushing to cities—earning a bare subsistence, can live in a satisfactory state. Most

<sup>3</sup> The act was passed largely in response to the terrible famine in western India in 1898.

of them are in the moneylender's clutches. They do not understand things, such as how to build houses, how to keep well- and pond-water clean, what the benefits of cleanliness are, and why a lack of cleanliness is detrimental. This causes them and their progeny untold harm. It is not possible to bring about an improvement in all these matters only by enacting laws.

If laws cannot bring about improvement, the question is: what else can the government do in this regard? In my opinion, the government can do one effective thing in this regard, which would both be better than all their legal enactments and acceptable to everyone, namely, introduce compulsory and free primary education. I think that there is absolutely no alternative to this as far as Indian workers are concerned.

The improvements achieved in Germany and Japan—the two countries that were once dependent upon agriculture alone—ever since free and compulsory primary education was introduced, are well known. People in these countries no longer need to depend on agriculture alone. Trades and industries now flourish in these countries. And the credit for all this must go to the efficient arrangements for education made by their respective governments.

Hunger and ignorance have oppressed our working class for thousands of years. The British government constantly exerts itself to rescue them from the clutches of hunger. But our workers are not likely to escape starvation until they are rescued from the clutches of ignorance. The government digs a canal and increases the yield of a farm; and the peasant squanders [the extra income] on a wedding celebration or some other useless function—this cycle will continue until the obliteration of peasants' ignorance.

Various obstacles are cited as preventing government from introducing free and compulsory primary education. In view of the salience of the matter, we must see these as very minor. The problem is funding. But how surprising that a princely state like Baroda has no dearth of funds for free and compulsory education, while the British government has! The government can be frugal on other fronts, or borrow money if there is none in the exchequer—but not postpone the introduction of free primary education.

Another problem being advanced as an excuse is that education will

breed discontent. It is true that, initially, some may not like a system of compulsory education, but major opposition to it is unlikely. People in the princely state of Baroda soon began to like it, so why would people in British India not? Are people in British India more ignorant than people in Baroda state?

Today, our working class may not appreciate the importance of primary education. But the next generation is bound to appreciate it and be deeply grateful to the government. The present leadership has given its unanimous consent in this matter, and the government stands to earn credit for permanently freeing the working class from worldly misery through the gift of education. That is why we demand, on behalf of workers, that the Government of India should settle this question quickly with the help of the [newly] expanded council.

### 3. The Duties of Municipalities

*Although the body is diverse in terms of limbs like arms and legs, the limbs have pleasure and pain in common; therefore it should be treated as one and nurtured as such. Similarly, although the world is diverse (in terms of king and subjects, the learned and the ignorant), it has joys and sorrows in common; therefore it should be treated as one and nurtured as such.—Bodhicharyavataṛ [Skt]*

It has been many years since the British government handed over municipal rights to Indians. It is a matter of great satisfaction that, these days, the government has decided to give municipal self-government to smaller cities as well. But the news that a commercially successful city like Ahmedabad has lost its rights brings a kind of despondency. That the government should be liberal enough to concede rights to the people, and that the people should be unable to maintain them is, to my mind, the worst display of weakness in our people.

How can municipalities which are unable to keep city streets and water clean, and in whose administration the government is compelled to intervene, help to improve the condition of our working class? Still, one has to give it a try, instead of giving in to disappointment. Let us hope our municipalities will one day be able to help the working class, and let us consider their duty in this regard.

A hurt sustained by one organ affects the whole body. Similarly, decline in one part of a city affects the whole. This principle is accepted in Western nations. We do not need to travel far to implement it. People living in the filthy chawls of Mumbai become the first victims of the plague; but the disease is bound to affect the rest of the city. It is true that the rich go off to live in their bungalows in nearby villages to protect themselves. But they are not able to manage as comfortably as they wish there—they are put to a great deal of trouble going back and forth, and most taxing of all is their sense of constant unease.

Even after suffering all this, we are not willing to give up on our way of thinking. If we have the money, we build a bungalow in a village nearby; if not, we build a hut and protect ourselves during a plague epidemic—but we do not bother to think the problem through from a public point of view. 'No municipality, no nothing! Who wants this unnecessary bother? Have we nothing better to do!' This is the majority view in our society. And very few even among those who do bother have a vision beyond self-interest. This situation is crying out for people to discard indolence and wake up—and awaken those who have control over their municipalities. If they are not willing to be roused, they should be sent home to sleep in peace, and their powers should be transferred to people better suited.

When the control of our municipalities devolves on suitable leaders, they cannot be tardy attending to the needs of poor workers. They will lack excuses such as: 'Where is the money? Where can we get clean water? Crushed stone of a good quality is difficult to find.' In our opinion, those who lack the capacity to find a way out are not worthy of taking control of our municipalities.

Our brothers must pay attention to the efficient administration of cities in Western countries. In France there is a city called Roubaix, with a population of 1,40,000. Its municipality provides free education to the city children, and moreover provides lunch in schools. Guardians with paying capacity are charged an average of 6 paises per day to feed a child in kindergarten, and 2 annas for a child in the primary class. From 1892 to 1908, this municipality provided 28,18,601 meals, of which only 30,403 were paid for by guardians. This means the remaining meals were provided free of charge.

The municipality of Milwaukee in the United States has started building well-ventilated houses for workers. The municipal officers

here have decided that not a single tenement building should be allowed to remain in the city. When ventilated houses are ready, they will demolish the tenement buildings. In addition, the municipality has decided to introduce several improvements in Milwaukee city for the convenience of workers. Many such examples can be given; I think these should suffice.

Our municipalities should give due thought to the improvements introduced by city municipalities in Western nations, and try to follow their example. If our municipal officials have no time to consider or see for themselves the improvements that have been or are being introduced in Western countries, they should arrange to send aspiring young men there and collect the information. It is true that this will incur an expenditure of municipal funds, but the experience of other countries is likely to be of good use.

Excuses, such as the want of money or aspiring young people, are no good. If young men in our country are ready to work as volunteers during a plague epidemic, will they not be ready to help destroy the filth in cities which is the root cause of the plague? If one is equipped with hands and feet, intelligence and cleverness, one does not in the least feel the want of money. It must be remembered that all the wealth in the world has been created with the help of this very equipment.

Finally, we make the following request to municipal officials on behalf of the working class. These workers have constructed your offices and homes; they have made your clothing, your furniture, and everything else for you; they slog for twelve and fourteen hours a day for your pleasure—knowingly or unknowingly. If you want your country to advance, you must first take care of them. At least see to it that they do not lack sufficient food, clean air, and water.

#### 4. The Duties of Indian Capitalists

*One should treat a dasa and a dasi as one treats a son.*

In advanced countries today, *dasas* and *dasis* do not exist as a class. But in their place has sprung up another class—known as the working class. In a place like Mumbai, the condition of this working class is more pitiable than that of those who formerly were *dasas*.

The masters of former *dasas* took care of them, at least for their own good. The masters wanted their *dasas* to be strong and able to put in



a lot of work, so they provided them proper medical care during times of illness. They had to look after the children of the *dasas* as well, so that they could work for them or for their children. But our workers are not granted even these advantages. They hardly ever see their masters. If they fall ill, they are at liberty to go and die in peace in some hospital. Their masters have no interest in how their children grow. They may be looked after by Christian missionaries or the Prarthana Samaj if they so wish; or if they grow up without help from these people, and turn out bad or become addicted to vice, the police are ready to take care of them anyway!

In years of prosperity, *dasas* received special facilities from their masters and also a share in their prosperity. But the condition of present-day *dasas* is quite the opposite. When there is a shortage of goods, they get barely enough to eat. But when there is a surplus of goods in the market, the mills are closed two days a week! This means that the master is prosperous but the servants starve.

In a couple of matters these new *dasas* have more freedom than did *dasas* of the past. They can leave one master—without his permission—and accept another. They also have complete freedom to stop working and starve to death, or to commit a crime like theft and go to jail!

Does the master have no duty *vis-à-vis* such a pitiable working class? Do the masters free themselves of their debt to workers by flinging their wages at them once a week? No. The rich cannot free themselves of their debt to their workers so easily. It is not the duty of our merchant class to grant their workers the freedom to starve to death the moment there is a surplus of goods in the market—after these workers have obtained for them a 200 per cent profit and allowed them to earn wealth large enough to be squandered by five generations or more. It is not the duty of our rich to pack off like sheep in chawls at Dadar, or some such place, workers who have enabled them to build bungalows in airy locations such as Malabar Hill. It is not proper for our rich to allow the children of their workers to roam the streets like urchins—when these workers have enabled the rich to send their own children to England to study.

O capitalists of India, you are conceited about your generosity! Many of you open cattle pounds and feed sweets to cows; many add

to temples, ghats, and other things of no use to mankind; many give large sums to schools, colleges, or the Transvaal Fund in order to gain more fame. But this generosity and compassion of yours is ridiculous, as described by the following verses from the *Dnyaneshwari*:

*Should a person break off his arm and cook it in order to appease the pangs of hunger,*

*Should a person demolish various temples and construct a compound wall,*

*Should a person break down white-washed houses and build temples and shrines,*

*Should a person cheat in his transactions and distribute free meals,*

*Should a person cover the head and thereby leave his legs uncovered,*

*Should a person break down houses and erect a mandap [i.e. awning]—*

*Would these actions not invite ridicule and derisive laughter?*

You cook in poverty the very workers who are your hands and feet, all in order to satisfy your hunger for luxury. You use the wealth created by workers—at the cost of their domestic happiness—to build temples and shrines. Colleges and universities become for you the nation's head: you give them large donations and thereby cover the head, but you pay no attention to the nation's arms and legs—namely, the workers who are naked and exposed. Instead of laughing at such antics, the wise need to express sorrow and surprise.

O capitalists, just as you love your children, you must love your working class. This will benefit you spiritually and practically. Let me give you just one example.

Some years ago the French started to dig the Panama Canal, but their attempt did not succeed, as is well known. The reason was that the French did not take proper care of their workers. The climate of Panama is terrible. With the crowding in there of workers from many countries, epidemics erupted and workers began dying in large numbers. Naturally, the French were compelled to fold up and declare bankruptcy.

The same task has now been undertaken by the United States government, and it is certain to be completed in about five years. The reason is that the United States government has taken excellent care of their workers from the start. First of all, the government cleared the

forest in the area through which the canal is to be dug. It built well-ventilated houses for their workers, and only then took a large number of workers there to start the present task.

Now there are facilities for workers, such as a kitchen, a laundry (the best in the world and very large), an ice factory, a soap factory, barbers' shops, a storehouse of musical instruments, a theatre, piped water, and electric lights. Food supplies are well controlled by government in order to prevent adulteration.

A letter from one of the workers there has been published in a newspaper here. He has said of the engineer and the council there that they have done up the place so well that many of them want to stay on; and that they are free from the clutches of capitalism and its system of profit, at least for the time being.

What wonder that these workers work on the Panama Canal with great enthusiasm? This army of workers is ready to breach the vast wall built by Nature between the two oceans, and to make way for ships to pass. And the whole world feels certain of its success.

O Indian capitalists, can you not emulate this? Most among you are vegetarians, your needs are fewer than those of European capitalists. Even so, you provide no facilities measuring those given by European capitalists to their workers. Is this not surprising? Whether you give large donations or not, you must take care of the health of your workers, and their children's education. If you do not, you must be said to have failed in your chief duty.

## 7

# Civilization and Non-Violence, 1935<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. The Culture of Forest-Dwellers

Non-violence is closely connected with human civilization. As non-violence advances, so does civilization. Had parents not possessed a non-violent attitude towards their progeny, neither human society nor the communities of animals and birds would have developed. One need only imagine what hardship human parents bore in order to nurture their young in the early stages of forest-dwelling. Only when human beings are prepared to trust one another and unite under the

<sup>1</sup> This is Part V: '*Sanskriti ani Ahimsa*' of Dharmanand Kosambi's *Hindi Sanskriti ani Ahimsa* (Indian Civilization and Non-Violence). The word '*sanskriti*' seems to have been used in this text to mean both 'culture' and 'civilization', as mentioned earlier.—M.K.

leadership of a leader in matters such as hunting—in order to protect themselves and their young—can the culture of forest-dwelling be said to have begun.

If we consider such a group of forest-dwellers, we can see that they trust their leader implicitly and approve of the justice he metes out. They are ready to help the sick and the wounded in their tribe. In brief, their non-violent attitude is limited to their tribe. If they catch hold of people of another tribe, they kill them all, together with their wives and children. The tribe does not benefit by keeping them alive; on the contrary, it might be reduced to starvation by having to share its prey. If the tribe kills and finishes off the other tribe, the prey available in the [latter's] hunting ground also comes into its possession and leads to an expansion of its hunting empire. Almost all forest-dwelling tribes underwent this process and most disappeared into the jaws of Time. It makes one shudder just to think of their history!

## 2. Empire: Its Merits and Failings

But this history changed altogether when some of these tribes were able to subsist on foodgrains and obtained the means to produce them. It was no longer necessary to kill, even minimally, the able-bodied men of other tribes; tribes gained great advantage by bringing them over as prisoners and using them as farm labour. While they laboured, the [conquering] people enjoyed their wealth and concentrated on administration and religion. The early kingdoms that arose in Babylonia were established by the clever tribes of Sumerians. The practice was for a tribe to conquer an area and settle a city there, and enslave those who were inferior and force them into manual labour. The superior class, freed from manual labour, found the leisure to develop arts and crafts such as sculpture, writing, fighting wars, discovering metals; and these city states became increasingly powerful.

But they had always to be on their guard against neighbouring cities. This gave rise to the warrior class, or Kshatriyas. The belief that they were able to defend their city by the grace of God led to a separate class of priests or Brahmins. Warriors had to devote their time to training for war. But the priests had no work other than worship rituals, so they had ample leisure to develop the arts of writing and astrology.

If two cities settled close to each other and their boundaries touched, boundary disputes arose and sometimes had to be settled through war. Thus the warrior class expanded. They could not afford to sit idle for long, but had to attack another city on some pretext, enslave its warriors, and annex its area to their own. This practice led to the institution of empire. Small cities were always at war, and one may only imagine how happy people must have felt when an emperor terminated warfare and established unified rule. Every city in Babylonia had its own deities: one city worshipped the sun, another the moon. With the establishment of empire, the emperor too came to be worshipped alongside other deities.

The Babylonian pattern was replicated in the Indus [Sindhu] region. Among the small cities settled there it can be surmised that there was fierce competition. Indra destroyed these cities and established a unified kingdom, which is why he earned the epithet 'destroyer of cities' [Purandara] and began to be worshipped like other gods, as has been shown in Part I. Therefore, no matter how cruel Indra was, it could be said that his empire led to the growth of non-violence. The warfare among various cities round the year now ceased and people were able to move about the surrounding areas in peace. No wonder, then, that people came to regard these sovereign kings as gods and started worshipping them.

Even a sovereign kingdom cannot be free from fear. A vassal may gradually increase his power and become sovereign himself. Backward people beyond the borders of the sovereign king may unite, emulating their advanced neighbours, and accumulate weapons. Warriors living under the patronage of the empire become wealthy, while leisure renders them extremely lethargic. In such a situation it is easy for aspiring tribes of forest-dwellers along borders to destroy an empire; and a new empire is thus established. This does not necessarily lead to improvements; sometimes there is a setback. But usually the 'backward' empire-builders learn a great deal from people who have advanced. This happened in Babylonia thousands of years ago.

First of all, Sumerian kingdoms arose in south Babylonia. As luxurious living caused their decline, the backward Accadian or Semitic peoples conquered them and established their empire. While taking over most elements of culture from the Sumerians, the Semitics

retained their own language. This was also so with the Keshis, who were expert horsemen, but considerably less advanced than the Babylonians in other respects. After establishing their empire in Babylonia, they took over not only the more sophisticated elements of those they had conquered, but even their language. The same happened with the Romans. They conquered Greece and enslaved the Greeks; but these same slaves became their teachers!

In our country, this happened with the Shakas. They retained only their [god] Mahadev, but took over Hindu culture in every other way. The Shakas apart, other forest-dwelling tribes such as Huns, Gurjars, Malavs, entered the country and established kingdoms. But excepting a few, they lost all their customs, as well as their deities; they absorbed Indian culture in its entirety. The Huns had a great conflict with the Guptas. The Huns were very oppressive in North India; but when they ended warfare and settled here, they had nothing foreign about them except the surname 'Hun'.<sup>2</sup>

When backward people show unwillingness to be assimilated into the culture of an advanced people, or alternatively when they retain their own religious cults, the conquered suffer. People who give evidence of the former are Genghiz Khan and his descendants, the Mongols. Conquering all of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, they did not accept the culture of the Muslims or Christians. As a result the states in Central Asia, such as Samarkand and Bukhara, as well as Russia, suffered decline. The cultures of this region were almost destroyed.

An example of the latter are the Muslims. When they went into countries carrying their religion as revealed by Allah, they felt not an iota of respect for the local culture. They destroyed the excellent cultures of Egypt and Persia. They could not entirely destroy Indian culture; but during their reign it was almost dead; and the suffering of the Hindus knew no bounds.

A second drawback of empire is that the people under its umbrella become mentally lazy. They are convinced they cannot manage without the emperor. The king becomes a divine incarnation; whatever he does is to be endured, and he has to be propitiated. Even Brahmins hasten to worship their god—whether it is Madadev or Vasudev—and

<sup>2</sup> There are still some people in Punjab who use the surname Hun.

claim importance. Within this culture of mental sloth, people become totally confused if attacked by a foreign power—such as the Muslims.

The greatest drawback of an empire is that the masses are enslaved as toilers. The emperor may install the god he fancies, the noblemen worship him, the priests (whether Brahmins, Moulvis, or others) earn sacred gifts and idle away the time, and the rest of the people toil as slaves for the Brahmins and warriors who live off their labour.<sup>3</sup> Such is the situation resulting from an empire, and the toiling masses crushed by it become wholly indifferent to their country and their future. They are convinced that their slavery will not end—whether they have self-rule or foreign rule. An external power that can mount a coherent attack is able to conquer such an empire with ease.

### 3. The Industrial Revolution: Its Merits and Failings

As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the dominance of the middle class was established everywhere; this brought the oppressed, toiling masses a sense of relief. Trade needed peace, so that the frequent rioting and arson stopped, and farmers and artisans enjoyed the freedom to pursue their occupations in safety and security. Moreover, clever persons within this class could become part of the bourgeoisie. What a change! People—not only in countries which had the Industrial Revolution, but also in conquered countries like India—benefited from this difference. This was why all—young and old—started saying that under British rule one may tie one's gold to a stick and carry it from Kashi [in the north] to Rameshwar [in the south]! The leaders of the Brahmo Samaj even called this change Divine Dispensation.

Not much time was required to dispel this misapprehension. Within a hundred years the common folk began to see drawbacks in the new system: some people lolling in luxury, others toiling all day for bare subsistence—such was the situation within different parts of the same city. Earlier, peasants were able at least to breath fresh air; the new slaves were not even able to do that. If you go to a working-class neighbourhood

<sup>3</sup> The word for slave used in this extract in the Indian context is *dasa* (*dasi* for females). These were different from slaves in the Greek context, but the same word is used for both in the original, and retained in the translation.—M.K.

in a city like Mumbai, you get a clear idea of what the condition of workers was like some sixty years ago in countries like England and Germany, and the condition of Russian workers before their political revolution.

In former times, kings and princes squandered their money on gambling. Only a few noblemen of their own class gambled with them. But in this Industrial Age, everyone may gamble through the share market or horse races. Dharmaraj staked Draupadi when he gambled [in the *Mahabharata*]. It is true that women cannot be staked in this new form of gambling, but sometimes they suffer even more than Draupadi. It is left to one's imagination to visualize what a woman goes through when a worker loses his entire month's wages on the races, and as a result a Pathan [employed by moneylenders to recover loans] comes and sits at her doorstep! In this task of making gambling a terrible public addiction, the Industrial Age has succeeded well.

Workers in Europe earn at least a living wage in the form of unemployment allowance. But the torment of people in backward and conquered countries under this bourgeois rule knows no limits. A drought can kill lakhs of people crying out for food; even during times of good harvest, a large part of the masses are half-starved. One begins to feel that it would be better for such people to die than languish for years on end in such dire poverty. It is almost the reason why they are so repeatedly visited by epidemics such as influenza, cholera, and the plague. But these do not solve the problem. It is the young, able-bodied men, rather than the old and the infirm, who fall prey to these epidemics, so that the survivors are in even worse straits than they were earlier.

Although capitalist countries are more prosperous than backward countries, they are seen as being under a great threat. Among them, England and France have grabbed as much territory as possible. Germany acquired a small portion of Africa, and Germans were increasing in number. Germany could not conquer China because of the greater power of Japan and the internal feud among European nations. Naturally, Germany turned its attention to the colonies of France and England; and that was the reason for the last World War. Today, Japan is biting off more and more parts of China, and Mussolini is getting ready to 'reform' Abyssinia. This grabbing game has made amity im-

possible among the European nations; as a result, all nations have to be ever prepared for war. It is impossible to tell where and when the conflagration of war will be lit. These nations find themselves caught between two fears—fear of war with other nations on the one hand, and fear of the lower classes rising up in revolution on the other. How can a frightened nation or person be happy?

The Bolsheviks are not afraid of revolution because the oppressed class in Russia has especially benefited from the Bolshevik political system. At present the only country free of unemployment is Russia; all other countries suffer to some extent from unemployment. And the Russian workers know this. Even so, even Russia is not free from fear. In the East, Japan is eyeing Bolshevik territory, and in the West the whole capitalist world is against them. In this situation, instead of producing the means of comfort and convenience, the Bolsheviks are rapidly increasing their fighting equipment—especially airplanes. Trains do not run on time, so Russian mills do not receive raw materials on time; the lack of sufficient mining machinery leads to postponing coal mining. But the work of building airplanes and other fighting equipment goes on rapidly.

There seems little hope of averting the calamity of a future war. Statesmen are trying to postpone the danger, that is all. There is a story in Shanti-parva [of the *Mahabharata*]. A man was lost in a dreadful forest and could not find his way out. He began to run about in fear of wild animals such as lions and tigers. The forest contained a large well, covered by creepers and grass. While running the man fell into it, and, getting entangled in the creepers, hung in mid-air. A beehive was stuck on a tree on the side of this well, and from it honey began to drip. The man stuck out his tongue and started licking the drops!<sup>4</sup> This simile applies to an extent to the European bourgeoisie. They are hanging in a tangle of creepers created by capitalism. On the one hand is the fear that the creepers of capitalism will break because of another world war, on the other the fear that the honey bees—in the form of workers in their hive of mills—will eat up the honey. Even when caught between these two fears, they continue licking the few

<sup>4</sup> Kumbhakona Edition, chapter 205. I have made some changes in the original simile.

drops of the honey of profit that drip from the hive! They are unable to see a way out of this calamity.

#### 4. Craving as the Origin of Suffering

Enjoyment of what is essential for the body is not craving; the ever-increasing greed for objects of enjoyment is craving. This vice is found even among creatures other than man. If a dog is given ample food but is unable to eat it all, it sits guard and will not allow other dogs near. Craving grows apace in the human race. If a person who earns two annas per day starts earning five rupees, he is not thereby made content. He will exert himself to earn ten rupees. And his greed will increase twice as much as his gain.

Buddhist texts describe three types of craving: craving for sensual pleasure, that is, for objects of enjoyment; craving for existence, that is, for the next life; and craving for non-existence, that is, to dissolve into nothingness. A man is not satisfied with only sufficient objects of enjoyment. He wishes to enjoy heavenly riches after death; he bestows sacred gifts and charities upon *śramanas* and Brahmins, he performs sacrificial rites, observes sacred vows and fasts, he is even prepared to abandon all and perform austerities. Craving for non-existence may not be as dominant as the other two, but it is not uncommon. There do exist people who think that the world ends when they die, and this craving leads them thoughtlessly to kill others or harm themselves.

The *Tripitaka* literature contains many and detailed examples of the disasters that occur because of the craving for sensual pleasures or lust. It may be appropriate to cite some extracts here. In the *Maha-dukkha-kkhandha-sutta* of *Majjhima Nikaya*, the Lord says to the monks:

O monks, what is the drawback of the enjoyment of sensual pleasures? A young aspirant works as a clerk, or enters trade or a craft, or gains government employment to make a living. He finds this work very troublesome but still exerts himself night and day to acquire objects for his enjoyment. If he cannot acquire them, he is filled with sorrow, and anxiety over his failed effort confuses him. If he succeeds in his efforts and obtains the desired objects, he becomes engrossed in protecting them for fear they will be looted by kings or thieves, or destroyed by

fire, or washed away by floods, or fall into the hands of coparceners he dislikes. This troubles him greatly. But despite all these precautions, kings or robbers loot his wealth, fire or floods destroy it, or undesired coparceners wrest it. This grieves him enormously.

And, O monks, it is for the sake of these sensual pleasures that kings quarrel with kings, a Kshatriya with a Kshatriya, a Brahmin with a Brahmin, a Vaishya with a Vaishya, a mother with a son and a son with a mother, a father with a son and a son with a father, a brother with a sister and a sister with a brother, and friend with friend. This conflict sometimes results in their attacking one another with their hands, with stones, sticks, or weapons, which leads to their death or to lifelong suffering. [. . .]

O monks, a person is liberated from sensual enjoyment only by giving up attachment to it. (He is not liberated from it merely by giving up sensual enjoyment itself. [It is the attachment that matters.] )

Then there is another important sutta entitled *Kama-sutta* in *Sutta Nipata*. It is of very ancient origin and a detailed commentary on it is in *Maha-niddesa*. This is why it is being reproduced in its entirety here:

- (1) *If a person desires sensual enjoyment and if he obtains the desired object, he is really happy.*
- (2) *But if the person becomes firmly attached to sensual enjoyment and if these objects of enjoyment are gone, he suffers as if pierced by an arrow.*
- (3) *A detached person who dissociates himself from sensual pleasure from a distance, just as one keeps one's foot away from the mouth of a serpent, conquers craving in this world.*
- (4–5) *When a person forms an attachment to various sensual pleasures—such as fields, gardens and parks, wealth, cattle and horses, slaves and servants, wives and brothers—his adversaries become strong and he is confronted by numerous obstacles. As a result, suffering enters his heart just as water enters a leaking boat.*
- (6) *This is why a person should always cautiously discard sensual enjoyment. And he should cross the current [of worldly life], just as one crosses over by bailing water out of a boat.*

The shoots of craving look very attractive when they first sprout in a person's heart; but when craving grows into a forest and obsesses his heart, his life is utterly destroyed. An excellent simile in this context is to be found in *Chula-dhamma-samaadaana-sutta* in *Majjhima Nikaya*, as follows:

At the end of the hot season, a *maluva* creeper was in fruit.<sup>5</sup> One fruit broke open and the seed fell under a *shala* tree. The deity inhabiting the tree—its very soul—was terrified. Then the deities that were its friends and relatives gathered around it and said, 'Do not be afraid. This seed will perhaps be eaten by a peacock or a deer, or burnt by fire; forest guards will not let it grow; it will be eaten by termites; or it will turn out hollow.'

But the seed was unharmed and sprouted shoots in the rainy season. And that young, soft, and tender creeper embraced the tree. The deity inhabiting the *shala* tree thought, 'Why did my friends and relatives frighten me so? I for one find the touch of this young creeper very pleasant!' But the *maluva* creeper kept growing. It covered the whole tree; it entered its big branches and felled them. The deity of the tree said to itself, 'Alas! This is what my friends and relatives feared—and what has caused me such pain today!'

The Chain of Causation that arises from craving ends in something very harmful, as described in *Maha-nidana-sutta* in *Digha Nikaya* as follows:

Thus, O Ananda, sensation results in craving, craving results in pursuit, pursuit in gain, gain in resolve, resolve in attachment, attachment in clinging, clinging in possessions, possessions in jealousy (i.e. jealousy guarding one's wealth or learning, so that others do not benefit from it), jealousy in insecurity. Harboring insecurity leads to the acquisition of sticks and weapons, conflict, quarrels, feuds, dispute, slander, false speech, and many such sinful and unmeritorious things.

When an individual is bound by sensual desire, that individual clearly exhibits the passions described in the above extract. If a person

<sup>5</sup> This creeper grows at the foot of the Himalayas, and it was believed that it totally destroys the tree upon which it spreads.—M.K.

works hard, collects some money, and deposits it in a bank, he becomes despondent if the bank fails; sometimes he even goes mad. How this wealth leads to internal fights, such as those among Kshatriyas or Brahmins, need not be described. Internal quarrels among families are frequently exhibited in law courts these days. Therefore there is no need to comment further upon the destruction caused by personal craving. The above extract, with some slight changes, is entirely applicable to the present situation. But when this craving or attachment to sensual pleasure is transformed into a social phenomenon, even the learned find it difficult to understand its true nature, and as a result they too become instrumental in all these harmful doings.

Take the case of the [Buddhist] sangha, for example. The personal effects of a monk were supposed to consist of three robes and a begging bowl—that too made of clay or, at most, iron. But protected places such as dwellings were not forbidden them. Therefore, devotees started to build viharas, and the monks developed attachments which grew and turned into possessions. That is, they had to have servants to look after the viharas, landed property, etc., and accept help from kings for their security. In places like Tibet, the sangha bypassed the kings and took this task upon itself. It being impossible for monks to repulse enemies with weapons, they concocted an apocrypha [puranas], and even took to slander by entering politics. Even when the sangha had fallen so low, its members were unable to recognize the downfall. Even learned monks were prepared to make up false stories, perhaps by telling themselves: 'I observe all the correct practices, I obey the rules of conduct meticulously, I am particular about meditation and samadhi, and if I sometimes make up stories, they are only for the benefit of the sangha and not out of self-interest.' That is, it was difficult for them to understand that their personal downfall was caused by the sangha's [collective] craving.

Christ preached that 'A camel may pass through the eye of a needle but a rich man will never go to heaven.' But His own devotees started collecting possessions, as will also become clear from the example of the Buddha's sangha. The sangha of padres undoubtedly surpassed the sangha of monks in this matter. Monks concocted stories in order to protect their viharas. But the padres decided to win the whole world as their empire and started terrible wars resembling the crusades! The

moral is: craving soon looks ugly and becomes harmful when seen in an individual, but the same craving does not soon lose its beauty when expressed in a collective form, and its dreadful effects take long to become apparent.

The evil deeds of padres came to be exposed. The famous French author Voltaire pursued them relentlessly. The masses lost faith in them. This is when craving began to find the monastic order [literally, the padres' sangha] dangerous as permanent residences. It found a new habitation and began to lure people with the help of a new garb, just as an ageing prostitute makes herself look young with the help of adornments, changes her residence, and carries on luring men. Its new habitation was nationalism, where it was particularly influential. Monasteries were distant from the common people; therefore it was easy to create disrespect about them among the common people. But such is not the case with nationalism. A nation is made up of all manner of people—high and low. Therefore this was a good habitation for craving, and it had an enjoyable time until the last world war.

It seems appropriate to offer an illustration of how the Chain of Causation in *Maha-nidana-sutta* applies to the present nationalism. I wish to show this with the help of the nationalism of the British, who are closely connected with us.

Famines and epidemics spread in the nations of the world from time to time, but very few nations were really aware of them. It may be said that in the sixteenth century this awareness appeared first in England. The realization [literally, 'sensation'] created a nationalist 'craving' among the upper class in England. They began to feel that they had somehow or the other to increase the wealth of their nation. This craving led to a 'pursuit': efforts began to be made to rush to America to settle colonies, to establish the East India Company for profitable trade ['gain'] in the East, and so on. This adventure yielded profit sometimes, and loss at others. It necessitated 'resolve'—and the practice of pushing ahead only where there was profit, retreating where there was a loss. Then the 'clinging' or attendant desire to strengthen the sources of profit became powerful, which led to 'possessions' and to a structure of authority by marking out boundaries. This created 'jealousy' for guarding one's wealth, and the need to maintain 'security'. The nationalist view was that the English navy should be stronger than

every other in order to maintain its mastery over the seas; and even minor competition prompted the use of weapons of resistance. 'Conflict', 'quarrels', 'feuds', 'disputes', 'fights', 'slander' or politics, 'false speech' or newspaper propaganda, and many such sinful things came about.

It was not as if no one feared the seed of national craving growing in England. Goldsmith says:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.

And again:

While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure all  
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

Goldsmith's whole poem, 'The Deserted Village', is filled with thoughts that warn England of future danger. But who cared? England's soul was confused with youthful national craving, as was the *shala* tree with the embrace of the young *maluva* creeper. Even eminent statesmen whose private lives were beyond reproach were lured by nationalism and prepared to engage in any kind of political acts—which they were convinced were not bad! The national good, that is, bringing into the country the wealth of other countries, turned every evil deed into a praiseworthy one!

As this national craving developed, it first broke off a large branch of the British Empire, namely North America. Just then, this tree sprouted new branches in the form of the Indian Empire in the East. Then, instead of feeling disgusted by craving, England developed greater greed. The result was the last world war. At this time the workings of craving became obvious. The colonies became almost independent; Ireland became independent—and, moreover, the greed became oppressive for the original tree. Even so, this craving has the support of branches in Africa and in the East; and there is no indication that this craving will perish until it completely destroys those branches.

After defeating the Spanish Armada, English national craving had full scope. The European nations were engaged in fighting among themselves, and unable to compete with the English in naval matters.



America could have expanded its navy and defeated the English, but it had no need to do so, because right inside America there was any amount of wealth to be acquired. Naturally, England found it easy to win the title 'Queen of the Seas'. But, as the *Kama-sutta* says, their weak adversaries are now becoming strong. If the navies of Italy and France are united in the Mediterranean Sea, and if they are supported by the fighter planes of those countries, it will not take long for England's mastery over the Mediterranean Sea to end. And once this sea route is lost to England, their empire in the East cannot be sustained. This means that England's imperial greed has made England itself weak, while the surrounding weak nations are becoming strong, and this is creating numerous obstacles in England's path.

In sum, collective craving is more terrible than personal craving, and national craving is more pernicious than collective craving. Initially, it may look delicate and beautiful, but after a while its results cannot but be destructive. Collective or national craving enters the upper class and lives off intellectually backward people. But when these backward people begin to resist, the craving turns upon the collective and the nation. Because of this craving, Spain oppressed backward peoples in many ways. As a result, those countries became independent of Spain, and Spain became impotent and helpless. Even so, at present Italy and Germany have happily embraced the same creeper of craving, and are swaying [in the breeze]. In this lies the origin of the suffering of all Europe.

### 5. The Avoidance of Possessions

Parshwa and Buddha seem to say that the avoidance of possessions [*aparigraha*] is the only cure for craving or the desire for sensual pleasure.<sup>6</sup> Parshwa even included the avoidance of possessions in his

<sup>6</sup> Parshwanath was one of the founders of Jainism and propounded *Chaaturyaama*, or the Four Conquests of (or abstinences from) killing, falsehood, stealing, and possessions. He preceded the Buddha, who incorporated these four concepts into his Noble Eight-fold Path. See Dharmanand Kosambi, *Parshwanathacha Chaaturyaama-dharma*, Mumbai: Dharmanand Smarak Trust, 1949. The book was published posthumously.—M.K.

four Yaamas; and the Buddha's teaching to give up objects of enjoyment is found not only in the above extracts but also in many other places. The Buddha and his contemporary Vardhaman Tirthankar of the Parshwa tradition differed [only] over matters of detail pertaining to possessions, not the main issue. Both preached that men ought to renounce every object of enjoyment, such as a wife, male and female slaves, and landed property. The Buddha maintained that one should retain only the cloth necessary to cover the body; Vardhaman Tirthankar maintained that even that should be forsaken. But this Buddhist and Jain stricture to shun all possessions was limited to their sanghas. The result was that [for instance] five hundred monks would give up their wives and slaves to join the sangha, yet a single king would marry twice as many wives and keep four times as many slaves. This narrowing of the applicability of dispossession as an ideal led to effects that were harmful rather than beneficial.

Intelligent men often gave up wives and slaves, becoming Buddhist monks and Jain sadhus. However, they still needed subsistence and a dwelling place—this need the common people were unable to satisfy, evident from the fact that the sanghas kept expanding. This then meant the sanghas were compelled to obtain royal land grants. They thus acquired possessions and, alongside, the attendant problems of ownership. In sum, the sanghas—like the common people—were unable to free themselves of possessions. The avoidance of possessions was preached, not practised.

Buddhists and Jains considered woman the chief possession. It is obvious that once a man acquires a wife, she will be followed successively by a house, servants, and gardens. This is why they argued that woman was the most significant of possessions, and why the rules of the sangha stipulated that it was a serious offence to make any connection with a woman. The nuns in the sangha of nuns were also forbidden close contact with men. The contact between men and women was deemed harmful and the cause of all worldly suffering. But experience shows that establishing such [separate] sanghas of monks and nuns resulted in more harm than good. Initially, these sanghas were moral in their conduct, but with the acquisition of possessions their morality declined, resulting in disgusting practices such as the various Tantras, worship of the linga [phallus], etc.

Very recently, since the emergence of the idea of women's emancipation, the notion that woman is not a possession has taken hold. As long as woman is considered a possession, society cannot be said to have achieved moral progress. Women's emancipation is the test of non-violence and culture. Man's tendency to violence has turned women into slaves. Had women's hearts not been full of maternal love, they would never have accepted such slavery; they would have committed [mass] suicide and put an end to the human race. If women have kept us alive, even accepting terrible customs such as *purdah*, it is only because of maternal love. By contrast, incarcerating women in this fashion shows that men have reached the zenith of their tendency to violence. Therefore, if the culture of non-violence is to fully develop, woman should not be regarded as a possession but given freedom in every way. Only cultures within which women are free can emerge as non-violent, leading to the happiness and welfare of humankind.

The emancipation of women in Western countries is at present superficial, I think. Most women are financially dependent on men, and therefore not independent. Even if their husbands are addicts, love of their children prevents them divorcing their husbands and freeing themselves. A divorced woman may manage to support herself but refrains from divorce out of concern for her children, quietly enduring her husband's conduct. Many women in Western countries support themselves by working as clerks, etc. But they are not independent either. If any such woman intensely desires a child, there is no way by which she may have one. She remains single all her life for fear that it [becoming a mother] entails permanent slavery to a man, and she is [consequently] deprived of maternal love.

Women have been granted real freedom in Soviet Russia and this has created a perpetual storm in capitalist countries. Bourgeois newspapers complain that women have been made a part of national property, and the echo of this is heard even in Delhi.<sup>7</sup> In a speech before

<sup>7</sup> The complaint that the Communists want to nationalize women is old. The Communist Manifesto published by Marx and Engels in 1848, contains the following passage [in chapter 2]:

'But you Communists would introduce a community of women,' screams the bourgeoisie in chorus.

the Central Legislative Council on 12<sup>th</sup> September (1935), the Hon'ble Government said that existing laws did not prescribe punishment for expressing new ideas such as attaching property or nationalizing the means of production; and that women are a means of production. (There were shouts of 'Order, Order'.) Shri Sathyamurthy said that not even the Law Minister could transgress the rules of propriety. At this the Hon'ble Government said the idea was expressed not in India, but in some books.

This is an excellent example of the irresponsible and arrogant behaviour of the present officialdom. It is not likely that this Law Minister of ours has read any books on the subject, or anything other than bourgeois anti-Soviet newspapers. If he had, he would not have made such a statement. In Russia the collective owners of wealth are all the male workers as well as all the female workers. The only difference [between the two] is that women get more facilities than men. If a woman worker is pregnant, she is entitled to six months' paid duty leave—three months before and three after her delivery—and later her child is looked after by trained nurses on behalf of the government. When the child is a little older, the government takes responsibility for its education. Moreover, the child also gets lunch in a government school. It is sheer mischievousness to claim that a country—which grants all these facilities to women—has nationalized its women, or that the Communists are attempting to do this in other countries. Instead, it might perhaps be acceptable to say that Russia has nationalized men, because the burden of granting such facilities to women and giving an excellent education to the future generation rests more on men's shoulders than women's.

I have not seen statements like those of the Hon'ble Government

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The bourgeois sees his wife as a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.'

This complaint is about ninety years old now. Who knows how long the capitalists plan to keep it going?

made by officials in other countries. However, officialdom everywhere thinks the same way. It is accustomed to exercising authority not only over the backward classes but also over women of their own class. In their view, woman is a walking-talking machine intended as a luxury, a means for producing fresh cannon fodder to feed future wars! Therefore officials believe they should exercise authority over this machine, as over other machines, and they lash out against anyone who favours women's emancipation.

In the extant ancient literature we never encounter the idea that woman should not be regarded as a possession. Obviously, women's freedom was not possible in those times. Manu's line that 'A woman is not fit for independence' is well known.<sup>8</sup> Buddhists and Jains established sanghas for nuns and *sadhvis* [female sadhus] and gave them a great deal of freedom. But this was limited to their sanghas, and they gained it at the cost of children's love. If they married they were counted as a superior kind of wealth. Naturally, as in the Vedic literature, in the Shramanic literature too women have been included among possessions.

Of the Indian writers of the Middle Ages, Varaha-mihira is the only one who seems to champion women. He says:

- (5) *Those who have taken recourse to renunciation, and who describe only women's faults without paying attention to their virtues, are bad [durjana] and their speech is not well motivated, I think.*
- (6) *Tell the truth: which fault may one find among women that is not also to be seen among men? Men have gained control over women by sheer daring. Even Manu says that they are more virtuous than men.*
- (13) *He who transgresses upon his wife should be required to expiate by covering himself with the skin of a donkey—with the furry side out—and beg for food from door to door for six months.*

<sup>8</sup> *Men must make their women dependent day and night, And keep under their own control those who are attached to sensory objects. Her father guards her in childhood, and her husband guards her in her youth, And her sons guard her in old age. A woman is not fit for independence.*—*Manusmriti*, chapter 9, verses 2–3

[The above translation is taken from *The Laws of Manu* translated by Wendy Doniger and Brian K. Smith, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1991, p. 197.—M.K.]

- (14) *What daring men display when censuring innocent women! This is like thieves shouting, 'Stop, thief.'*—*Brihat-samhita*, chapter 74 (Skt)

One cannot praise Varaha-mihira enough for this championship [of women]. Even so, Varaha-mihira was not free of the idea that woman is a valuable gem which should be greatly cherished and cared for.<sup>9</sup> Even today, in a country like America, which has reached the pinnacle of capitalism, views of women remain more or less the same. Upper-class men exert themselves greatly for the woman's happiness, her enjoyment of luxury. Even so, there are any number of divorces! The reason is that women's urge for freedom is not satisfied merely by their being cherished like valuable gems. Women will not feel they are truly free unless they are able to support themselves; and within the present-day capitalist world, women who wish to be mothers cannot be self-supporting.

Karl Marx propounded the idea that women cannot possess true freedom without economic freedom, and his adherents—the Bolshevik leaders—are now trying to implement it. Doubtless, their path is full of obstacles. The chief obstacle is women's conditioning. It is scarcely to be wondered that women incarcerated in the dark cell of subjection think it dangerous to step suddenly into the bright sunlight of freedom. In this context, I remember the story of a woman who had been imprisoned in the fort of Bastille in Paris for thirty years. At the beginning of the French Revolution, the populace demolished the fort, gaining this woman her freedom alongside other political prisoners. But she was terrified of the sunlight and said, 'If you don't take me back to my dark cell, I will murder someone and be hanged!' It is apparent that, if given over an extended period, one may come to love even such harmful conditioning!

The question of women's emancipation will not be solved via economic freedom alone. It requires proper education among both women and men. Women should understand the worth of their motherhood, and men should develop the conviction that women are not objects of enjoyment, but mothers of the next generation, and

<sup>9</sup> He says in the same chapter:

*God has not ever created another gem like woman to delight men through sight, sound, touch, and remembrance.*

therefore to be revered. The Bolsheviks have taken the first step firmly—that of women's economic freedom—and are about to build the second step—education—on that strong foundation. Meanwhile, the moral failings that persist in men and women are pardonable. Mocking the Bolsheviks and being contemptuous of their effort is unpardonable. If anyone has made a genuine attempt to stop women being treated as possessions, it is the Bolshevik followers of Marx; and for this I congratulate them most sincerely.

During times of war, the sorts of possession next in importance to women were thought to be male and female slaves. The institution of slavery existed in every ancient country—such as Babylonia, Egypt, and Greece. Or, rather, the civilizations of those countries were entirely dependent on the institution of slavery. In our country, people of this class were the Shudras. During Vedic times they were also bought and sold like slaves. Gradually, they were transformed into an inferior caste because their numbers increased so substantially that it was impossible for upper-caste people to keep them as slaves. The same thing happened in Europe. When slave numbers increased, they were included among serfs. Serfs could be sold along with land. This practice continued in Russia until 1861.

With the growth of English colonies in North America, slavery was vigorously revived. About a dozen English companies started a profitable trade in slaves. With the help of armed guards these companies caught able-bodied men and women and young boys and girls, carried them to America in ships, and sold them openly in the large markets there. This cruel trade continued for many years, and plantation owners in America thought nothing of it. George Washington, the founder of America's freedom, himself had hundreds of male and female slaves.

Abraham Lincoln earned credit for uprooting slavery in America. The reason was that slavery seemed likely to bring disaster upon the Whites themselves. And the leadership of White people in the Northern and Western states who opposed slavery devolved suddenly upon Lincoln. The farms of Whites in the North were small, and not even fertile. Naturally, it was impossible for them to compete with the enormous plantations run by slave owners in the South. Slave owners there could sell their grain cheaper, resulting in Northern farmers getting low prices for their grain. It was thus natural for enmity to develop between Southern plantation owners and Northern farmers.

Western states such as Iowa were settled recently by the Whites, and slave owners were trying to enter them along with their slaves. There was plenty of fertile but fallow land. But White settlers there feared that if Southern slave owners gained entry, they would swallow up the whole state by sheer strength of their slaves. So they and the Northern farmers formed a close alliance. Given this situation, writers in the Northern and Eastern states mounted strong attacks on Southern slave owners, and the opposition to them grew day by day. In the midst of this commotion, a poor farmer's son—the renowned American president Abraham Lincoln—was suddenly elected president by a White majority in the North and the East. First of all, he tried to not allow slavery to spread beyond the eleven Southern states. But the Southerners saw this as a first step towards the abolition of slavery, and they unfurled their flag of independence. The war lasted four years, and the North and East won. This permanently buried slavery, not only in America but in the whole advanced world.

In this fashion, the old practice of slavery ended within the advanced nations, but the slave-owning tendency has not yet ended. American negroes have been emancipated from slavery by law, but their conditions are as poor as those of their slave ancestors. On the slightest pretext, negroes are burnt alive in broad daylight before a large White crowd! This is called 'lynching' in America. White women also join in the burning of negroes! Negroes thus have to endure much trouble. Despite such hardships, negroes progress day by day, and the Whites fear they will wreak vengeance at some point or the other.

Among the Whites in Europe, the lust for owning slaves has culminated in biting off pieces of Africa and the backward parts of Asia. They do not want the responsibility of catching *all* Blacks and turning them into slaves. Their policy is to go and conquer the Black countries; make the people there prepare the raw material; bring it to Europe; turn it into finished products through their factories; and make enormous profits and become wealthy. Blacks prepare the raw materials; moreover, if they are given a taste of modern reform, they buy the finished goods manufactured by their White masters. That is to say, these backward people become slaves and customers at the same time; and the White masters have no responsibility towards feeding them.

Slave-owning did not agree with the American plantation owners; similarly, its new version will undoubtedly prove disagreeable to

European Whites. Not only the Southern states, but all of the United States were compelled to atone for slavery with the bloodbath visited upon their younger generation. It is historically well known that the war to abolish slavery [i.e. the American Civil War] killed lakhs of young White men. European Whites have started their atonement with the last world war; but one does not know when their bloodbath will end. Their greed for control over Blacks has not diminished; and as long as their greed for slave-owning lasts, they will have to atone for this greed via increased bloodbaths.

Only Russia has remained free of this modern greed for slaves. The oppression suffered by backward people in places like Samarkand and Bukhara during the Czarist regime has entirely ended during the present Communist rule. What is more, the Bolsheviks are trying their utmost to raise these people to a level of equality. Women in these Muslim areas had long languished in purdah; the Bolsheviks rescued them from purdah and accepted the entire responsibility for their education. Readers who doubt this are requested to read *The Red Star in Samarkand* by Anna L. Strong, a learned American woman, and compare it with Miss Mayo's *Mother India*.

But how can a bourgeoisie which praises Miss Mayo approve this act of the Bolsheviks? They have begun screaming that the Bolsheviks intend to spread their Red Empire everywhere. If emancipating modern slaves is Red Imperialism, why should one not call Lincoln—emancipator of the negroes—the founder of Black Imperialism? In sum, the ill effects of this modern slavery have not yet been felt by the European bourgeoisie. They will be able to continue this slavery as long as they manage to keep the unemployed in their countries quiet with low wages. But how will their internal conflict end? If England and France have plenty of slaves, why not Italy? And why should Germany not get back the ones who escaped its control and went to England and France?

The Russian leaders should be thoroughly congratulated for having recognized so early the ill effects of modern slavery. Lacking the capacity to free the whole world from this slavery, they have yet removed it from their own empire and seem eager for China to be free of it as well. This may be their selfishness. The leaders of the United States also acted with self-interest when liberating large and small

states in South America from European kings; but it was self-interest of a high order. They were afraid that the strengthening of monarchy in surrounding regions would lead to the disintegration of their own republican democracy, which is why they aided South American nations in gaining independence from European kings. The self-interest of the Bolsheviks is of a similar kind. China shares a boundary with them. If Japanese bourgeois power stabilizes there, their own socialist power will be adversely affected. This is their fear, and they seek to establish socialism in China only in order to protect their own socialism. Are there any who will not call this self-interest of a high order?

The above discussion shows that subsuming women as a whole—or male and female slaves—under the category of possessions brings untold calamities upon mankind. It is absolutely essential for human development to give them every kind of freedom and treat them as equals. Abandoning wife and children as well as slaves and renouncing the world in accordance with the Buddhist or Jain belief will not free man of these two possessions—this is the lesson of history. Never mind mankind, even *shramanas* cannot be freed of possessions. They accept slaves as a possession in the form of servants who take care of *aramas* and *viharas*, and for this purpose they have to create an apocrypha and behave obsequiously with over-possessive kings, as has been shown in Part II. So the path shown by Karl Marx and his socialist adherents seems here to be the right one.

After women and slaves, the next object of possession is landed property. Even if all women are emancipated, and even if the discrimination between Blacks and Whites is eliminated and all men are made equal—if land and other means of production are privately owned—freedom for women and slaves will not last even a short while. It is obvious that the lives of all serfs who till the land and earn a subsistence will be controlled by land-owners, and the lives of mill workers by mill-owners. For this not to happen, land, factories, and all the means that facilitate their functioning—such as banks and railways—should be owned collectively.

The Buddhist and Jain solution has proved of no use in this regard. If many men give up their landed property and renounce the world, all of society and—after a period of time—even the sanyasi sangha itself, incurs a loss. There have to be some people to cultivate land. If

all men and women give up their land and become renunciants, all will soon starve to death. In order to earn their subsistence, the sanyasi sanghas were compelled to accept land grants from kings; and this led to their downfall, as shown in detail in Parts II and III. Naturally, therefore, abandoning land cannot facilitate the avoidance of possessions. If all want to live, all must work. Kings and noblemen living in extreme luxury, and *shramanas* and Brahmins in idleness, put a tremendous strain upon the labouring class and crush it. The ill effects of this have to be suffered alike by all. Therefore, giving up landed property means making this possession collective property—this thesis of the socialists alone is beneficial for the advancement of mankind.

### 6. Satyagraha

Satyagraha means basing oneself on the two Yaamas [conquests] of Non-violence and Truth in order to resist evil laws, and gladly enduring the calamities that befall one in the process.<sup>10</sup> Through satyagraha we want to obtain swaraj, but most people do not know what kind of swaraj this will be. And even Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of satyagraha, does not clarify this explicitly. As a result, many people are confused and from time to time ask Mahatma Gandhi for a clarification. For example, in July last (1934) Mahatma Gandhi travelled to the United Provinces. The zamindars there asked him, 'How will we fare in the swaraj that you seek to obtain?' Mahatmaji replied, 'If you conduct yourselves like the trustees of the people, you have nothing to fear in swaraj.' Similarly, when Gandhiji is a guest in a princely state, he counsels them that, 'Princes should conduct themselves in accordance with the ideal of Rama-rajya.'

Perhaps this teaching of Mahatmaji satisfies eminent people—but not a common man like me. A study of history has made me believe that Truth and Non-violence will never last without the avoidance of possessions, as described above. I do not hate kings or zamindars; they have been created by circumstances. But to call them our trustees is

<sup>10</sup> The concept of Parshwanath's four Yaamas—conquests of or abstinence from all kinds of killing, falsehood, stealing, and possessions—has already been mentioned.—M.K.

totally inappropriate. Their forefathers accumulated wealth solely through violence, and it is being protected solely on the strength of violence. To make these people—who are steeped in violence—the trustees of Truth and Non-violence is as ridiculous as handing over the keys of the safe to a thief!

One day a young and prosperous man came to Christ and said:

'Good Master, what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life?'

And he said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.'

He saith unto him, 'Which?' Jesus said, 'Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

The young man saith unto him, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?'

Jesus said unto him, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.'

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, 'Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

And again I say unto you, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'<sup>11</sup>

It would be appropriate for Mahatmaji to give the same kind of advice to our present-day princes and zamindars, and he has the ability to do so:

<sup>11</sup> Matthew, 19, 16–24. [Instead of re-translating the passage, I have reproduced it from the Gospel according Matthew in the New Testament of *The Holy Bible* (King James Version) except for the first line, and added quotation marks. In the Marathi original, the young man addresses Jesus as 'Sadguruji', to give the story an Indian flavour. Also, the author refers to Jesus only as Khrista (Christ), a name more familiar to Maharashtrians.—M.K.]

Look, your forefathers acquired this wealth with violent tendencies, and you protect it today solely with violent means. Violent power is concentrated in the hands of the British, which is why you are compelled to seek patronage of the British. How may you enter the kingdom of Non-violence and Truth taking along such wealth? It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for you to enter the empire of Non-violence. However, we do not insist that you should go and sell what you have and give to the poor this very day. But when the time comes, you should be absolutely ready to give up all wealth in order to establish the empire of Non-violence and Truth.

If possessive people like you enter our swaraj, Non-violence and Truth will not last there a single day. In order to protect your possessions, we will have to be ready to engage in violence day and night. But that would not suffice, and we would have to make up false sacred stories—as the *śramanas* and Brahmins did—or create constitutional safeguards and build a federation, as the present-day officialdom has to do. This means being mired again in the great mud-pool of falsehood and violence. That is why we do not wish to allow people with possessions into our swaraj.

To this, our wealthy people would say, 'If this is the case, why should we not seek protection from the British?'

[We would reply:]

'But Gentlemen, it is a sheer misconception that you can permanently hold on to your estates and princely states with protection from the British. The power of the Czar and the Russian aristocracy was many times greater than that of the British; but where did it go? The same Czar who was able to send crores of people to their death on the battlefield went to his own death helplessly, along with his wife and children! Where are the arrogant Russian aristocrats today? They are eking out a bare subsistence in cities like Paris and New York, by working as doormen and chauffeurs. The Western bourgeoisie has given them shelter at least to this extent. But you will not get even that. If you are forced to leave India and run, as Asiatics you will not even be able to get into America; and if you are able to enter Europe, no one will employ you as doormen, etc., because European workers themselves are unemployed. In this situation, you may be able to seek refuge with

the British and protect yourselves for a while, but not live without fear. And having to live in constant fear is sheer hell. If you want salvation from this, give up your desire for possessions, and come with us. Be partners in the unparalleled joy of serving the people.'<sup>12</sup>

Who would say that this advice does not become Mahatma Gandhi?

In response to this, the wealthy people with possessions would ask, 'Are you going to liquidate our landed estates and princely states by force?'

The answer is this:

'That would depend on you. If you develop a concern for the people, if you begin to fear possessions as Parshwa and the Buddha did, then there can be no reason to wrest your landed estates. In Japan there were many vassals [Shoguns?] and they fought among themselves for their rights. But when the flame of national pride was lit in their hearts, they made over all their rights to their country through Mikado. We do not consider you inferior to them. In this country were born self-sacrificing

<sup>12</sup> In *Chulla-vagga* in *Vinaya Pitaka*, there is a story of Bhaddiya [Bhaddiya in Sanskrit], king of the Shakyas. He became a monk in his youth, and lived in solitude along with five other Shakya princes and their barber Upali. At that time, he would exclaim, 'Oh, what joy! Oh, what joy!' This made some monks suspect that he had thought of his royal pleasures. When the Lord came to know of this, he sent for Bhaddiya and inquired into the matter. Then Bhaddiya said, 'Lord, when I was king, there were constant arrangements for my protection within the palace and without, within the city and without, within the country and without. Even so, I lived in fear, dejection, suspicion, and a troubled state of mind. But now I live in a forest or in solitude—fearless, free from dejection and suspicion, and in an untroubled state of mind. That is why I exclaim, 'Oh, what joy! Oh, what joy!'

This is the joy of having given up royal pleasures. In addition, Acharya Shantidev says in his *Bodhicaryavatara*.

*Nirvana is giving up everything, and that is what I wish for. If I have to give up everything, it is best to do so for the welfare of all creatures.*

*Would I not be satisfied with the ocean of joy that would become available [to me] when all creatures are freed from suffering? Why gain joyless salvation?* [Skt]

By abandoning their great and small estates for the good of mankind, would our wealthy people not share in such unparalleled joy?

philosophers like Parshwa and the Buddha, and kings like Ashoka who were ever alert in the service of all creatures. We do not think that you, the princes and zamindars of this same country, lack the capacity to emulate these distinguished persons. You should be eager to sacrifice your insignificant possessions for the advancement not only of your country, but of all mankind. If you demonstrate such sacrifice, your fame will last forever, to the end of history. But who will respect you if you act selfishly and protect your estates? You should give up this low attitude, and, as Mahatma Gandhi says, become the true trustees and guides of India. We shall make all efforts to awaken you for this purpose, and hope for success.'

The possession of wealth by princes, zamindars, and other prosperous people harms our country. Just as harmful, or even more, is the possession [i.e. harbouring] of religious sectarianism [*saampradaayikataa*] by the common people.<sup>13</sup> Socialists say that religious sectarianism is the opiate of the people, and we have clear proof of this. But it is not right to wean them away from an addiction to sectarianism by developing a new addiction to nationalism. If religious sectarianism is an opiate, nationalism is liquor; and we can see its ill effects in Western countries and Japan. Therefore the chief duty of our leaders is to free the wealthy from their possession of wealth, the common people from the possession of religious sectarianism, and the imitative educated class from the possession of nationalism. At the very least they [i.e. the leaders] should themselves be free from all these possessions. If they are mired in possessions themselves, it is unlikely that they will save others. In order to make satyagraha successful, it is essential to have knowledge of these possessions and of the means of freeing oneself from them, as well as of conduct in accordance with this knowledge.

### 7. True Wisdom and Non-Violence

Birds and animals have some sort of knowledge, but it cannot be called true wisdom [*pradnya*]. The knowledge that evolves with past experience

<sup>13</sup> The word *saampradaayikataa* is translated here as religious sectarianism, because elsewhere the author uses the term *sampradaaya* for religious sects or religions, such as Brahminism, Jainism, Buddhism, etc. See D. Kosambi, *Parshwanathacha*. (Currently the word is understood as traditionalism in Marathi.)

is called true wisdom, and it is found only in the human race. Animals such as elephants used to live in herds five thousand years ago; they live the same way today. Birds of different kinds build their nests today as they used to five thousand years ago. This means that knowledge of these animals and birds does not evolve with past experience. But such is not the case with man. He makes excellent use of his past experience. Man does not have protective devices such as horns and claws. Even so, he is capable of protecting himself by acquiring various weapons on the strength of his true wisdom. Past experience is essential in order to develop wisdom, and so is social structure. Knowledge cannot evolve with the experience of just one man. His contemporaries or successors make use of his experience, and this leads to the constant development of the wisdom of human society.

But if non-violence does not develop proportionately with wisdom, it does not yield as much advantage as it could. Suppose a tribe invents new weapons, and they utilize them to hunt and earn their subsistence. But if their non-violence, that is, compassion, does not develop proportionately, they behave with other tribes as they do with animals, that is, they kill off tribes that are weaker. In some tribes, people even eat the flesh of their enemies! In sum, wisdom is instrumental in the advancement of mankind and is thus of use; but if it is not accompanied by compassion, it can also be destructive.

This is seen even in modern human society. White people have gone to Australia and America, and almost totally massacred the original inhabitants. They have not destroyed the negroes in Africa, but have oppressed them terribly. I mentioned earlier that they caught lakhs of negroes and sold them in America. In India they were unable to reach such depths, but they did commit many atrocities in the form of exploitation of wealth. And what is the reason for all this? It is that they advanced on the strength of their wisdom, but their compassion was limited to their own countries. They could not maintain a balance between the two virtues, which is why they committed—and are still committing—these atrocities.

It would be rare indeed to find another philosopher like Karl Marx, someone with such an excellent knowledge of social evolution. But he also suffered from the narrow-mindedness of Europeans. He demonstrated scientifically that it is possible to create a very happy social collective by uniting the oppressed of the world and removing their



oppressors. But he never thought of the utility of non-violence in this task. He maintained that the oppressed should collectively unite and destroy their oppressors. And the Russian Revolution has followed this same thinking.

If all the oppressed or workers unite, it will in fact no longer be necessary to kill the oppressors. But the culture in which Marx was born has a tradition which demands an adversary. The founders of Western civilization were the Greeks. Their entire culture was limited to their cities. Naturally, they were totally hostile to the people of other cities. In modern Europe this culture culminated in nationalism. People in European nations believe that an evil deed done in the service of the nation is justified. Just as the Greeks thought of other cities as adversaries, so do these nations think of other nations as adversaries. And their leaders claim that civilization will not advance without such competition. The solution to this, found by Karl Marx, is that the entire working class should unite and oppose the bourgeoisie. That is, the hostility among nations should be transferred to one between bourgeoisie and workers. Once capitalism is destroyed, this opposition will automatically dissolve. This stratagem is like removing a thorn with another thorn.

But there is a danger inherent in this stratagem: if, while removing a thorn with another thorn, the second thorn breaks and its sharp end remains inside before the first thorn can be removed, it is going to be more painful than it was. This situation has arisen today in Italy and Germany. An attempt was made to use the thorn of socialism to remove the thorn of nationalism; but extrication of the first thorn failed and the second thorn joined it.

More beneficial than advocating armed revolution to kill the bourgeoisie was Tolstoy's advice to the bourgeoisie to refrain from using weapons. This was the advice instrumental, to an extent, in the success of the Russian Revolution. The Czar was able to send people to the battlefield by force, but because the people did not wish to fight the czarist regime automatically collapsed. If all the workers in Western countries had similarly refused to fight [literally, done satyagraha] at the beginning of the world war, the war would have ended within a week. And the bourgeoisie in power would have automatically collapsed like the czarist regime. Had the wisdom of Karl Marx been accompanied

by the non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi, Western countries would not have been caught in the terrible danger of the world war.

In our country, Parshwa and the Buddha turned the current of non-violence towards the good of the masses. But it did not get into the political sphere and was, as a result, mired in a puddle of religious sectarianism. Around it grew the forest of the puranas. Mahatma Gandhi's attempt to give that current further impetus and turn it to the political sphere is truly to be congratulated. But it was obstructed midway and suffered a loss of direction. This was good, in a way, because if it had continued it would have fallen into the ditch of nationalism and proved detrimental. Only if non-violence is accompanied by the wisdom of socialists will this current turn in the right direction, and lead to the welfare of mankind.

## 8

### *Bodhisattva: A Play, 1949*<sup>1</sup>

*In this world, enmity never appeases enmity; only an absence of enmity appeases it. This is the eternal moral law.—Dhammapada, 1–5*

Mankind lives by the religion of love. It is the religion of love that reigns over mankind. If, on the contrary, violence had reigned, we would have been annihilated a long time ago. Even so, people and nations that regard themselves as progressive behave as if violence alone should be the basis of society. What a misfortune!—Gandhiji

#### Preface

‘Bodhi’ means perfect knowledge, and the person who makes unceasing effort to obtain that knowledge is Bodhisattva. In very ancient times, this adjective was applied to Gautama Buddha for the period extending from his birth to his attainment of perfect knowledge, as can be seen from the *vatthu-gaathaa* (or preface) of *Naalaka-sutta*.<sup>2</sup> This play has been written with the intention of drawing the contours of the life of this Bodhisattva, on the basis of the *Tripitaka* texts.

#### Act I

The story that Sage Asita foretold Bodhisattva’s future soon after his birth is very ancient; it is the basis of the first two scenes of this act.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is the translation of *Bodhisattva (Natak)*, Mumbai: Dharmanand Smarak Trust, 1949. The notes that follow are the author’s.—M.K.

<sup>2</sup> See *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, p. 96.

That Mayadevi died on the seventh day after Bodhisattva’s birth is mentioned in one or two places in the *Tripitaka*; it is the basis of scene 3. Scenes 4 and 5 do not have a basis in the *Tripitaka*. These two scenes express the idea that Bodhisattva was independent in his behaviour since childhood, but probably did not like hunting. Scene 6 shows the *vapra-mangala* ceremony of the Shakyas and Bodhisattva’s practice of meditating under a *jambhul* tree.<sup>4</sup> Subhadra Koliya is an imaginary character that has been used in order to show that farming was the occupation of the Shakyas and the Koliyas and that they had disputes over the water of the river Rohini. The *Jataka Atthakatha* imagines the occasion of Bodhisattva’s meditation to have taken place in his early childhood.<sup>5</sup> But *Lalita-vistara* places this event after Bodhisattva’s instruction in writing.<sup>6</sup> It is assumed that this event occurred after Bodhisattva completed twelve years of age.<sup>7</sup>

#### Act II

The heroine of the play is Yashodhara. Very little information is available about her in the *Tripitaka*. *Lalita-vistara* (pp. 157–9) contains the anecdote that she did not cover her head with the end of the sari when she went to her marital home, which invited criticism, and that she made a strong reply to this criticism. But this seems to be imaginary, because there is no evidence of this practice being prevalent in those days. The custom probably existed in some royal families that came from outside India at the time of *Lalita-vistara*, and the anecdote was written in order to show that it was unnecessary. However, it is possible to surmise that she was quite bold, from the following verses:

*O Brave (Buddha), I am a woman born in a Shakya clan, and your wife in your householder stage (1). O Great Sage, I celebrated the happiness I derived (in your company), but was not dejected by the unhappiness. For your sake, I was contented at all times (2). O Brave, on that occasion, the Lord (i.e. you) spoke*

<sup>4</sup> *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, pp. 90–2, 99–100. [*Jambhul* is a fruit tree: *Calyptanthus caryophyllifolia* or jambolana, as mentioned earlier.—M.K.]

<sup>5</sup> *Jataka Atthakatha*, Fausboll’s edition, vol. I, pp. 57–8.

<sup>6</sup> *Lalita-vistara*, Dr S. Lefmann’s edition, pp. 128–9.

<sup>7</sup> *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, pp. 99–100.

in the palace in the presence of the Kshatriyas, and thanked me as the woman who is benevolent, who (is a companion) in happy and unhappy times, who is a well-wisher and compassionate (3–4). I renounced my home and was initiated, and obtained the knowledge of the Truth just within a fortnight (5). [Pali]

These verses have been selected from the verses of Yashodhara in *Theri Apadana*. Although *Apadana* has been included in the *Tripitaka*, the text is of a much later origin than the ancient suttas in *Sutta Nipata* and *Sutta Pitaka*. But it must be older than *Lalita-vistara*. Therefore Yashodhara's nature has been depicted with the help of these verses. There is a story of Bhaddaa Kachchaanaa [Bhadraa Kaatyayanaa] in *Manoratha-purani Atthakatha*.<sup>8</sup> That story shows Yashodhara and this Kachchaanaa to be the same person. *Lalita-vistara* calls her Gopaa. Her father's name is not mentioned in the *Tripitaka*; it is taken from *Lalita-vistara* (p. 157).

There is a reference in *Jataka Atthakatha* that Bodhisattva, Yashodhara, and Kaludayi were born on the same day.<sup>9</sup> Yashodhara was probably married at the age of sixteen or seventeen, in keeping with the prevailing custom. This means that Bodhisattva was the same age. This being the case, how is it that they did not have a child until they were twenty-nine? That is why it is assumed that Bodhisattva had resolved to observe celibacy until the age of twenty-five. This has no basis in the *Tripitaka*. However, there were such young men at the time, as seen from the story of Maha-Kashyap and Bhadra Kaapilaani.<sup>10</sup> How the political system of monarchy encouraged child marriage is already discussed in *Bhagavan Buddha* (I, pp. 79–81). A small specimen of this is shown in scene 2 of this act.

Scene 4 assumes that Bodhisattva has become a member of the Shakya Sangha. Had he not been a member of the Sangha, he would never have faced the eventuality of having to renounce his country [i.e. kingdom]. How a member was inducted into the Sangha in a republic can be surmised from the chapter on *upasampada* [or ordination] in

<sup>8</sup> See *Bauddha Sanghacha Parichaya*, p. 218.

<sup>9</sup> See *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, p. 109.

<sup>10</sup> See *Bauddha Sanghacha Parichaya*, pp. 150–4.

*Vinaya Pitaka*. Its gist appears under the rubric 'Sangha' in *Buddha, Dharma ani Sangha*. It is also included in *Bauddha Sanghacha Parichaya* (pp. 14–20).

### Act III

The first two scenes of this act have been written on the basis of *Attadanda-sutta*.<sup>11</sup> At the end of scene 1, and also in scene 5, I have used the word 'satyagraha' which might make readers think that I am introducing the modern satyagraha into this play. But individual satyagraha was prevalent in the Buddha's time, as proved by the story of Rashtrapala (*Rathhapala-sutta* of *Majjhima Nikaya*) and the story of Sudinna in the first chapter of *Paaraajikaa Kaanda* in *Vinaya Pitaka*.

Rashtrapala was the only son of a wealthy moneylender in a town named Thulla-kotthita in the country of Kuru. When Lord Buddha came to a place near the city, Rashtrapala went, along with some Brahmins, to hear him preach the Dhamma. After hearing it, he was convinced that total celibacy cannot be achieved while remaining a householder. So he requested the Lord to initiate him. The Lord told him that his parents' permission was required. Thereupon Rashtrapala went home and asked his parents for permission, which they refused. Then Rashtrapala lay down, saying that he would die there; and he gave up seven meals in succession. This frightened his parents who consented to his being initiated. Sudinna also obtained permission in the same manner.

Bodhisattva's parents knew of his resolve to become a wandering religious mendicant and of his initiation, as can be seen clearly from the contents of *Ariya-pariyesana* and *Maha-sachchaka-sutta*.<sup>12</sup> Scenes 4 and 5 of this act are based on this. It is not clear whether Bodhisattva's initiation took place in the town of Lumbini or in Kapilavastu.<sup>13</sup> But there is ample evidence that Alara Kalama's [Aalaara Kaalaama's] ashram was located in Kapilavastu. So it is assumed to have taken place in that ashram.

<sup>11</sup> *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, pp. 104–6.

<sup>12</sup> *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, p. 111.

<sup>13</sup> *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, pp. 86–8.

## Act IV

The group of five monks were Brahmins of the Shakya country and were initiated after Bodhisattva's initiation, according to *Manoratha-purani* and *Jataka Atthakatha*. But this has no basis in the *Tripitaka*, and it seems somewhat improbable. The only thing I have assumed in this act is that they were residents of Shakya and Koliya countries, and became acquainted with Bodhisattva before he renounced his home.

The story of Bodhisattva's meeting with King Bimbisara at Rajagriha is found in *Pabbajja-sutta*.<sup>14</sup>

Bodhisattva went to Uruvela and practised austerities for six years; when he gave them up, the group of five monks left him. This story can be found in many places in the *Tripitaka*. But a mention of Sujata is made only in one sentence in *Ekaka Nipata* of *Anguttara Nikaya*: 'Among the female lay followers who took refuge in me, Sujata, daughter of Senani, was the first'.<sup>15</sup> On the day Bodhisattva became the Buddha, Sujata had given him food—this was her only achievement, as shown by *Manoratha-purani* and *Jataka Atthakatha*. But *Lalita-vistara* (p. 265) recounts that she and her friends went to nurse Bodhisattva at the time of his extreme austerities and to pay their respects; and it is older than the Pali *Atthakathas*. It is on its basis that I have written scene 4 of this act.

The oldest reference to the battle with Mara is found in *Padhaana-sutta* of *Sutta Nipata*. A translation is given in *Bhagavan Buddha* (vol. I, pp. 127–8). It has been divided into two: the conversation with Mara in scene 3 is written on the basis of the first part, and the conversation under the Bodhi tree on the basis of the second part. This sutta is given in chapter 18 of *Lalita-vistara*, and the battle with Mara is described again in detail in chapter 21. The author of *Jataka Atthakatha* has omitted this sutta. Although it is obvious that the story of Mara is wholly imaginary, it has been used here because it is very ancient and instructive. It has influenced even the life story of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, pp. 114–16.

<sup>15</sup> See *Bauddha Sanghacha Parichaya*, p. 236; *Bhagavan Buddha*, vol. I, p. 131.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 4, 1–11.

This play has been written with the intention of making the contours of Bodhisattva's life story easy to grasp. Its bases in the *Tripitaka* have been briefly indicated here. Those readers who find this discussion insufficient should read *Bhagavan Buddha*, at least chapters 2 to 5.<sup>17</sup>

Anyone desirous of making a film or a talkie on the basis of this play should take advance permission from me, and make changes—if any—only under my supervision.

Kashi Vidyapeeth  
Benares

Dharmanand Kosambi

25<sup>th</sup> December 1945.

## ACT I

## SCENE 1

Sutradhar [sings]:

To the best of my ability do I describe the early life of the Buddha—

He who saved innumerable people in this world through knowledge, compassion, and equality.

It points out a path through the forest of worldly life; like the sun it dispels darkness. May it bring you happiness and pervade the universe with peace!

Yesterday Mayadevi, the wife of our King Shuddhodana, gave birth to a gem-like son under a *shala* tree while walking about in a park. A celebration is to be held today in the town of Lumbini. (Sound of musical instruments and singing in the wings.) Oh, look, a group of men and women is coming here playing musical instruments, singing, and dancing. (Enter Sage Asita.) How has this Sage Asita come here today? These days he rarely leaves his hermitage to come into town. He must be on his way to Lumbini town for a special occasion. Come, let us also go there. (Exit Sutradhar.)

<sup>17</sup> The three books which have been chiefly referred to in this Preface are: [Dharmanand Kosambi,] *Bhagavan Buddha* [vol. I], Nagpur and Pune: Suvichar Prakashan Mandal [1940].

[Dharmanand Kosambi,] *Bauddha Sanghacha Parichaya*, Mumbai: Karnatak Press [1926].

A. Halle, *Lalita-vistara*, S. Verlag der Buchhandlung des Weisenhauses, 1902.

(Enter men and women singing and dancing, and waving their stoles in the air. They stand still at the sight of Sage Asita coming towards them, do namaskar, and stand on one side.)

Asita: What is this celebration for?

A Townsman: O Great Sage, this is a celebration in honour of the son born to our King Shuddhodana yesterday.

Asita: I see. Let your celebration not be interrupted. Carry on.

(He exits. The singing, dancing, and waving of stoles, as well as playing of musical instruments continue. Curtain after a while.)

## SCENE 2

(A large drawing room in the house of Shuddhodana. A large group has assembled. Sage Asita enters. Shuddhodana comes forward to welcome him, brings him to the dais and seats him, and sits on a seat on the floor to his left. The women sit on one side and the men on another.)

Shuddhodana: O Great Sage, we are greatly honoured by your visit on this auspicious occasion.

Asita: Yesterday was Vaishakh Pournima. Naalaka had taken the day off and gone home. As I sat looking at the night sky, I saw an excellent combination of constellations and felt that the gods were very happy. I was convinced that a great man was born in this town, and started out in this direction after completing my bath and daily worship ritual. On the way I saw the townspeople celebrating. It was they who gave me the news that Mayadevi has given birth to a gem-like son. I would like to see this great son.

Shuddhodana (to the servants): Bring the baby here.

(The servants bring Bodhisattva and hand him over to the sage. The sage places him in his lap, observes his characteristics, and exclaims: 'Great! Wonderful! This is a great man indeed!' Tears stream from his eyes.)

Shuddhodana: O Best of Sages, why are you suddenly overcome by grief? Yesterday our astrologer foretold that this boy will become a sovereign king. We hoped that he would gain independence for us. Now the sight of your grief fills us with anxiety. Do you think this boy will not survive?

Asita: O Shakyas, I assure you that this boy has nothing to fear from harmful stars. He will lack for nothing. You wish him to be a sovereign.

But how many years will a sovereign king rule? This boy will receive perfect enlightenment and set in motion the Wheel of the Dharma. His Dharma will lead to the welfare and happiness of many, and the rule of his Dharma will last for thousands of years. During that period many empires will rise and fall! I am quite aged now and will not live to see his kingdom of Dharma. This is the reason for my tears. (Curtain.)

## SCENE 3

Place: Shuddhodana's drawing room. He is sitting on his seat. Three or four Shakyas are sitting on nearby seats.)

An Old Shakya: How strange is the passage of Time! Shuddhodana, we had come here six days ago to celebrate the birth of your son. How happy we were then to hear the prediction of Sage Asita! And today we've assembled in the same place to share your grief! Your wife Mayadevi was undoubtedly a great woman. Her virtues are praised everywhere—generosity, good conduct, an energetic but calm temperament. She was a model for our young women. How very sad that she should die suddenly on the seventh day after her delivery!

Shuddhodana: She was not really ill. But she felt that her end was near. She called me and Gotami to her and said, 'The sage's prediction that this boy will become a great man will come true, but I shall not live to see it. I'm not worried about his nurture. I leave that to Gotami. She'll look after him so well that it will give rise to the saying, 'Let the mother die but the maternal aunt live.' Now do not grieve. Allow me to pass into the next world in a cheerful frame of mind. The heavenly angels are waiting for me! The airborne chariot is ready!' With these words she closed her eyes. How can I describe her face at the time? It was as if she had attained samadhi! This conduct and this attitude of hers dispelled our grief immediately.

Second Shakya: I was present at the time of a yogi's death. He was ill, but his mind was not disturbed. He passed away in a state of contentment!

Shuddhodana: Whenever Alara Kalama came here, Maya would go and meet him, and learn his yoga with great interest. But I never saw her practise yoga; she didn't like to make a fuss about it.

Aged Shakya: What a blessed woman! I am so old, yet I can't give up my attachment to my family. My sons and daughters are grown up

and are capable of fulfilling their family responsibilities. But that has not lessened my anxiety for them! I can't even sleep if anyone falls ill. And your Mayadevi could leave behind her seven-day-old infant son and calmly leave this world! Be that as it may.

(All sit quietly for a while. Curtain.)

#### SCENE 4

Sutradhar: Gotama has completed twelve years of age. He has already mastered mathematics and is now learning archery. But he does not want to hunt, because he does not approve of harming any creature. (Exit.)

(Place: Gotama's room. He is cleaning it in the morning. Gotami enters.)

Gotami: Child, what are you doing?

Gotama: Mother, I'm cleaning my room.

Gotami: Why? You have so many servants.

Gotama: I think I should do my work myself. The servants have other chores to do. I feel ashamed to call them all the time to do my work.

Gotami: But this will make the servants lazy.

Gotama: How so? They'll have some other work—if not in the house, then outside. And if they become lazy despite all this, what can I do? I don't wish to become lazy myself. Mother, would you like it if I became lazy? (Enter Udayi.)

Udayi: Gotama, what're you doing at home? Aren't you coming with us on the hunt?

Gotama: No, I've taken the day off.

Udayi: Why? Are you afraid of tigers?

Gotama: I'm not afraid of anyone. But you aren't going to hunt tigers, are you? You'll kill poor deer and hare! I don't approve of hunting such harmless creatures.

Udayi: If you don't want to shoot arrows yourself, then don't. But won't you at least see how Gurugi shoots arrows at running deer or hare without missing?

Gotama: I don't want to see that either. I can't bear to see the killing of mute animals.

Gotami: Child, how can you afford to say so? You are a Kshatriya, and you'll have to fight a battle sooner or later. During a battle one has to shoot soldiers running about wildly, and Kshatriya boys learn how to aim during hunts. A hunt is preparation for battle.

Gotama: But Mother, why do Kshatriyas have to fight battles?

Gotami: Look, it's their moral duty [dharma].

Gotama: How can it be the moral duty of a man to kill a man? The Nirgrantha [or Jain] *shramanas* preach that even an insect or ant should not be killed. How then can it be the moral duty of a man to kill a man?

Gotami: The religion of the Nirgranthas is meant for sanyasis. One should listen to their preaching and give them alms. But if Kshatriyas don't fight, who would protect their kingdoms?

Gotama: If all Kshatriyas come to love one another, would their kingdoms not be protected without fighting battles?

Udayi: Mother, you won't be able to convince him through argument. Our Gurugi also hesitates to argue with him. At times he puts such questions to Gurugi that the poor man is quite astonished. We, his fellow students, never allow an occasion for such an argument to arise.

Gotami: Udayi, I don't argue with him either. But shouldn't I give him a few words of advice, as his mother?

Gotama: Mother, forgive me if you think I've offended you. Ask this fellow if I've ever been impolite to Gurugi or to my friends. I'm prepared to be everybody's disciple. But only if I find an internal contradiction in something, do I discuss the matter—in all humility.

Gotami: Let that be. If you do not wish to go on the hunt, I shall not insist. (With these words, Gotami exits. Udayi follows her. Gotama sits alone, thinking. Curtain.)

#### SCENE 5

(Shuddhodana is sitting on a low stool in his room. Gotami enters.)

Shuddhodana: Do you know, Gotami? It seems Gotama didn't go on the hunt yesterday.

Gotami: I know.

Shuddhodana: Then how did you allow him to stay at home? How will he learn archery if he's so lazy?

Gotami: He isn't at all lazy. He's eager to do his work himself, but

he likes solitude. He says that he doesn't wish to kill animals in order to be an expert archer.

Shuddhodana: How then will he be adept when he needs to fight wars in his youth?

Gotami: He's learning target practice, isn't he? Why hurt him by going against his wishes? He's a treasure left by Maya; I have to cherish him with all my might. You can counsel him yourself, if you wish.

Shuddhodana: Maya handed him over to you; that's why I find it awkward to say anything at all. It isn't that he lacks virtuous traits. But he sits by himself, so all his friends and neighbours wonder what the boy would amount to. Of course I have full faith in Sage Asita's prediction. Even so, you have to prod him from time to time.

Gotami (at the sight of Gotama approaching): Here's Gotama himself. You won't scold him about the hunt, will you?

Shuddhodana: Gotama, come here. (Gotama approaches and stands near him.) Why are you standing? Sit down—there are so many seats here. (Gotama sits by Gotami.) I'm seeing you after such a long time.

Gotama: Father, I'm busy with mathematics and archery. And you are not at home much these days.

Shuddhodana: I've no leisure now that farm work has started.

Gotama: That's it. I've told Mother so many times to send me to the farm with you. She says to ask you. Will you take me to the fields on my day off?

Shuddhodana: In a week or so there'll be the festival of sowing. Your school will be closed on that day, and we'll take you along. (Shuddhodana gets up. Gotami and Gotama also stand up. Curtain.)

## SCENE 6

Sutradhar: The rainy season has ended and the season of Sharada is almost over. People in all towns have repaired their rain-damaged roads, which has facilitated travel. The beauty of Nature is unprecedented. How lovely the fields look—all ploughed and ready! They are now to be sown. This is the time when every Shakya king's fields have the ceremony of *vapra-mangala* or sowing. The Shakya kings work on their fields once in a while, but on the day of *vapra-mangala* it is customary for them to drive the plough along with the farmhands.

Today *vapra-mangala* is to be celebrated in King Shuddhodana's fields and he himself will plough the fields. A large *mandap* [awning] has been erected; all the farmhands will be given an excellent meal there. These sweetmeat sellers and toy sellers are on their way there with their goods. There will be almost a fair there. Come, let us also go there, to observe the function. (Exit.)

(Place: Shuddhodana's field. It is afternoon and the work of sowing has been stopped. Some farm hands are standing at a distance. Enter Subhadra Koliya. Shuddhodana welcomes him. They greet each other with namaskar.)

Subhadra: I received your invitation in time and started out early. But on the way, at our boundary, your *dasas* and labourers were quarrelling with ours.<sup>18</sup> I inquired into the matter and found out that it is a dispute about the water of River Rohini. The *dasas* and labourers of the Shakyas claimed that they had the first right to the water, and the *dasas* and labourers of the Koliyas claimed the same right. I said, 'People, why do you fight? The sowing has just started. If a water dispute starts at this stage, it'll certainly reach boiling point by harvest time. Who is to take water first is not a matter of right or honour; those who need water should take it first. There's no call for a quarrel.' I resolved the dispute by reasoning with them in this fashion. But that delayed me.

Shuddhodana: If you were delayed in the performance of your duty, it couldn't be helped. These water disputes have become a galloping disease. The Rohini has plenty of water, and if used judiciously, it would be more than sufficient for both the Shakyas and the Koliyas. But now it has become a matter of honour and humiliation. So it's natural for these disputes to arise. Let that be. You must be quite tired. Come, let's go to the camp.

(The two go to the camp, followed by farmhands. On the way they come to the *mandap* put up for meals. Gotami comes out on seeing Shuddhodana and Subhadra.)

Shuddhodana: Gotami, our guest here is tired by his journey and I'm tired by farm work. We shall rest for a while before eating. (To the

<sup>18</sup> The word *dasa* is retained in the translation of this play; elsewhere it has at times been translated as slave.—M.K.

servants) Listen, remember that everybody is to be served with care. Show courtesy to the blind, the maimed, and other poor beggars; don't insult them. Take care of the children.

Gotami: Aryaputra, don't worry about all that. They are adept in their work. The whole function will pass off satisfactorily.

Shuddhodana: I shall return in a while. (To Subhadra) Come, let's go to the camp and rest a while.

(Exeunt Gotami, servants, and farmhands. Shuddhodana and Subhadra enter the camp and sit down on seats.)

Subhadra: I reached your farm before the sowing was completed, and was happy to see you work. These days the ceremony of sowing has become just a ritual. The owner drives the plough over a short stretch and quits. There are very few who exert themselves so hard.

Shuddhodana: That's true to an extent, and that's why I worry about the future of these two countries. I've heard your reputation as an expert in farming; that's why I have purposely invited you. You can point out our faults and that will help us to improve our farming. As a guest you have praised us, which is fine. But I would prefer to understand our faults, so that our farming can flourish.

Subhadra: I didn't detect any fault in your farming. And even if there is any, it wouldn't be possible to see it in such a short time. I had once suggested to the Koliya Sangha that we should get our farming methods scrutinized by a select group of agricultural experts in our country or outside, and consider how our farming can be improved. But the Koliya Sangha paid no attention to the suggestion.

Shuddhodana: This suggestion of yours is really wonderful. If the Sanghas of the Shakyas and the Koliyas had together selected such a committee, it would really have benefited our country.

Subhadra: But who pays attention to such things? I saw the quarrel of the *dasas* and labourers this morning. If I had gone straight to the Koliya town hall then and had the town crier announce that the Shakyas and labourers are leading the Rohini water through their channels by force, all the Koliyas would at once have got ready to fight as one man. And I would easily have been counted as one of their leaders!

Shuddhodana: It's the same with the Shakyas. The great harm done by our dispute is that we have lost our freedom. Had we stood united, would the King of Kosala have interfered in our administration? (Enter a servant.) What is it? What do you want?

Servant: Arya, Kumar Gotama is sitting under the *jambhul* tree beyond. Gotami Devi requests you to come there to see him.

(Exeunt Shuddhodana and Subhadra. Curtain. Bodhisattva is sitting in meditation under the *jambhul* tree. At a distance stand Shuddhodana, Subhadra, Gotami, and servants. Curtain opens.)

Shuddhodana: Gotami, looking at him I feel convinced that he'll become a famous *jina* [one with spiritual knowledge] some time in the future, as predicted by Sage Asita.

(All stand still, watching Bodhisattva. Curtain. Shuddhodana, Gotami, and Subhadra are sitting in the camp, after their meal.)

Shuddhodana: Is anybody there? (Enter a servant.)

Servant: Arya, what is your command?

Shuddhodana: Call Gotama here.

(Exit servant. Enter Bodhisattva and Udayi. They greet all with a namaskar and sit down on one side.)

Shuddhodana: Udayi, you were nowhere to be seen.

Udayi: I was playing with the other children.

Shuddhodana: Was Gotama not with you?

Udayi: We pressed him to come. But he said he liked this scene and wanted to sit in a solitary spot.

Shuddhodana: Do you know that he was meditating?

Udayi: Oh yes. Last week he forced me and Sumana to sit and meditate.

Shuddhodana: What was that like?

Udayi: One has to sit cross-legged, with eyes closed, in a quiet spot.

Shuddhodana: And then what does one do?

Udayi: And then one thinks thus: 'I should be happy, my friends and relatives should be happy, all the creatures around us should be happy.'

Shuddhodana: So how did your meditation go?

Udayi: How would it go? When I closed my eyes, I saw deer prancing about, I saw snakes, and I was startled into opening my eyes. That was the end of my meditation!

Shuddhodana: And what about Sumana?

Udayi: As soon as Sumana closed his eyes, he saw sweetmeats. What samadhi then? He sat there salivating!

Bodhisattva: Father, Alara Kalama says that a person who wants to meditate has to have a steady mind. Udayi goes on hunts, so he sees



deer and snakes. And Sumana hankers after sweetmeats, so that is what he sees. But he who gives up hatred, hankering, and fear, and has a steady mind, achieves samadhi quickly.

## ACT II

### SCENE 1

Sutraddhar: Bodhisattva has completed sixteen years of age. His marriage has been arranged with the daughter of Shakya Dandapani. But he is perplexed about whether to consent to the match or oppose it. (Exit Sutradhar.)

(Place: Shakya Dandapani's garden. Yashodhara and her friend Vimala are strolling about. Enter Udayi.)

Yashodhara: Udayi, how come you to be here? I had thought you had forgotten us completely!

Udayi: How can that be? Whenever I came with my mother to visit my maternal uncle, I played in this same garden with you and the boys, didn't I? And you would climb up the neem tree, quick as a squirrel!

Yashodhara: And you would climb up the mango tree and eat raw mangoes!

Udayi: What happy days! We had no worries at all. But we were caught up in the training for our profession before we were twelve. They said we had to learn mathematics, and writing, and archery—for which we had to hunt! How would one find the time to come here, with all these exertions?

Yashodhara: Then how have you managed to come today?

Udayi: Today I've taken time off and come on an important errand.

Yashodhara: And have you finished it?

Udayi: Not yet. That's why I've come here looking for you. Gotama has sent you a special message; can I convey it to you here?

Yashodhara: Why not? There's no need to regard Vimala. She knows I'm engaged to marry Aryaputra, and that's what we were talking about. Come, let's sit on the platform around the peepul tree. Let me hear your message in peace.

(The three go and sit on the platform around the peepul tree.)

Yashodhara: Now Udayi, does Aryaputra wish not to marry?

Udayi: How did you know?

Yashodhara: You are about to tell me that. But I'd guessed as much some time ago. I was barely sixteen when my marriage began to be discussed at home. There were a couple of matches about which I had voiced my disapproval to Mother in advance, so Father gave up. Finally Aryaputra's name came up and Father said, 'He spends too much time in the company of holy men. How would he manage family life?' So I said to Mother, 'Mother, do you think that the company of holy men and a preference for solitude are bad traits?' Then Mother guessed that I liked the match. But Father said, 'Even if we approach them, Aryaputra would avoid marriage on some pretext.' Mother said, 'Never mind if we're rejected, but we should at least give it a try.' I think Aryaputra consented because of his parents' insistence. And now he wants to leave it to me to refuse. Isn't that right?

Udayi: It's not that Gotama doesn't wish to marry. But he wants to marry a woman who would agree to his observing celibacy until the age of twenty-five. If you don't agree to that, he'll oppose the match—and so should you, he says.

Yashodhara: Now Vimala, what do you think about all this?

Vimala: Why do you ask me? It's you who are to marry. How does my opinion count? But since you ask, I would say that there's no point in marrying on this condition.

Yashodhara: Tell me, Udayi, how did Aryaputra hit upon this matter of celibacy?

Udayi: Don't you know that the Nirgranthas are preaching celibacy these days? Not that people listen to them! But our Gotama has been influenced by this teaching. He says that young men should be celibate at least until the age of twenty-five.

Vimala: Then why marry before twenty-five?

Yashodhara: That's not Aryaputra's problem. He's a man, and can remain unmarried as long as he likes. But would my father allow me to remain unmarried for even a few more years? Whether I'm willing or not, he would certainly marry me off to some young man as soon as possible.

Vimala: Look, a beauty like you will not want for a suitable match. Why're you unnecessarily impatient?

Yashodhara: I'm surprised that you think me to be eager for marriage. Had I obtained my father's permission, I would have entered the

Sangha of Nirgrantha nuns and studied philosophy. But these days a girl's parents start worrying about her marriage as soon as she reaches sixteen. They find a daughter to be a really heavy burden! They get her married somehow and feel relieved.

Udayi: Such is indeed the situation. It can't be helped. But leave these things aside. Tell me what message you want me to convey to Gotama.

Yashodhara: Tell Aryaputra that I was very happy to hear of his resolve. Father told me that he and I were born on the same day.

Udayi: And so was I.

Yashodhara: You're fortunate indeed. Now don't interrupt and listen to my message carefully. I shall gladly observe celibacy in his company in accordance with his resolve, until both he and I are twenty-five. Aryaputra will teach me what I cannot learn by joining the Sangha of nuns. The nuns impart only the knowledge of their own religious sect, but Aryaputra will teach me the essence of many sects. If by chance he decides during that time to join a sect as a sadhu and observe lifelong celibacy, I too shall join the same sect as a nun and observe lifelong celibacy. Tell Aryaputra that his message has doubled my love for him.

(Curtain.)

## SCENE 2

Sutradhar: Bodhisattva's wedding was celebrated with pomp and splendour in Shakya Dandapani's town. A special feature of the celebrations was that several leaders of the Koliyas were present on King Shuddhodana's invitation. Some say that this function will put an end to the enmity between the Shakyas and the Koliyas. But others say that such functions do not end enmity. The guests eat and drink and make merry for a few days, they utter formal pleasantries—and forget it all when they return home.

(Place: Bodhisattva's room. It is very simple, with two beds and two low stools to sit on. It is night time, so a lamp is burning and has illuminated the room clearly. Bodhisattva is lying on his right side, but has not fallen asleep yet. Yashodhara enters, walks quietly to Bodhisattva's bed, and stands looking at him. Realizing that he is awake, she feels embarrassed and lowers her head.)

Bodhisattva: Why are you standing? Take a seat and sit down.

Yashodhara: But won't it disturb Aryaputra's sleep?

Bodhisattva: Not at all. You know how busy the last few days have been. I couldn't leave everything to Father and Mother. I was exhausted looking after the guests, and would fall fast asleep the moment I lay down in bed. If I woke up again, you would be asleep; and I didn't like to wake you up. Today I had planned to have a talk with you anyway. I thought you would go straight to your bed and lie down. Had you done so, I would have called out to you softly.

Yashodhara (brings a low stool and sits close to him): I haven't slept in my bed since coming to this house. After Mother-in-law and the other women went to bed, I would stand near your bed and gaze at you. You would be fast asleep. How attractive your face looks in sleep—as if you are meditating!

Bodhisattva: Enough of this praise. Tell me, you don't feel like a stranger here, do you? You don't miss you parents' home all the time, do you?

Yashodhara: I do miss my parents' home. But there's no reason to feel bored here. Mother-in-law told me on the first day, 'Daughter, this house is yours. Tell us what you want, don't feel shy!' And she is straightforward in her behaviour. Young women are afraid to go to their marital homes, and so was I; but Mother-in-law's affectionate behaviour has dispelled my fear completely. But I did have one doubt.

Bodhisattva: What?

Yashodhara: I had received the message that Aryaputra wishes to observe celibacy until the age of twenty-five. But why does he not talk to me? Is this also a part of celibacy? In that case, how would I obtain any knowledge from him?

Bodhisattva: Now you know that your doubt was baseless. Had I woken you up the first night, you would have been startled. Secondly, what was the hurry about talking? You are my life's companion, so we can take our time about things, I thought. I too can obtain a great deal of knowledge from you.

Yashodhara: I am after all a weak woman. I have no experience of the world. What knowledge can Aryaputra gain from me?

Bodhisattva: Look, men have to obtain wisdom through effort and studies, but it's inherent in women. It's only that it has no scope to develop in the present circumstances.

Yashodhara: If women also get opportunities to meet holy men and

discuss points of religion, their knowledge would develop. But we begin to be incarcerated in every way when we are twelve; at fifteen there's the pressure for marriage; and then comes family life. After getting caught up in that, how can knowledge develop? Why don't we have the freedom to marry when we want, as men do?

Bodhisattva: This is the result of the violent tendencies of men. They say that in former times there were no child marriages—like today—in our country. Women had complete freedom with regard to marriage. But the Shakyas and the Koliyas started fighting among themselves and lost their freedom. Whatever little freedom we have left to us now is dependent on the pleasure of the King of Kosala. If he sends a message tomorrow that the daughter of a particular Shakyas or Koliya should be sent to his inner quarters, which Shakyas or Koliya would have the courage to refuse?

Yashodhara: But Aryaputra, the King of Kosala doesn't come and see our young women, does he?

Bodhisattva: But his messengers and spies are everywhere and there must also be those in our country who want to win his favour. If one of them goes and reports, 'Maharaj, the daughter of such-and-such Shakyas or Koliya is very beautiful,' immediately comes the message, 'Send her to Shravasti.'

Yashodhara: If the Kosala King is so powerful, won't he be able to carry away married women by force?

Bodhisattva: Fortunately, things have not come to this pass yet. Monarchs are afraid of popular agitation. They fear that carrying married women into their inner quarters would lead to an uprising and they would end up losing their kingdom. That's why they leave married women alone, no matter how beautiful they may be.

Yashodhara: Then why don't people rise up when unmarried girls are carried off?

Bodhisattva: That is their stupidity. They think, 'The girl is of a marriageable age and has to be given in marriage to someone anyway; it's all right if Maharaj takes her.' This common belief prevents respectable men from resisting. What they do instead is marry off their daughters at a young age and relieve their anxiety.

Yashodhara: This is really unfortunate for the girls.

Bodhisattva: Very true. If monarchy is not contained, the present age limit of sixteen might gradually come down to eight, I'm afraid.

Yashodhara: Now I understand the reason why Father and Mother were so eager for my marriage. But if Aryaputra had insisted on not marrying just yet, what would have happened to me?

Bodhisattva: That was precisely the question before me. Had I been obstinate about not marrying until twenty-five, Mother and Father would not have pressed me much. But at the age of twenty-five I would have got a sixteen-year-old wife—not someone my age, like you. That is why I sent you a message through Udayi. I thought that if you agreed, we would stay together and observe celibacy. The sages of old remained celibate for many years; but when they entered the householder's life, they would marry a young girl. Therefore their domestic life wasn't happy and their progeny didn't turn out to be capable. To remain celibate until the age of forty-eight and then marry a young girl is one extreme; to produce children at the age of seventeen is another. The path between these two extremes is that both should be the same age and that they should have children after twenty-five.

Yashodhara: Aryaputra, how did you gain so much knowledge at such a young age?

Bodhisattva: I respectfully seek out holy men and thinkers, and ask them questions. I think deeply upon their advice and draw conclusions. That's the way to gain knowledge, I think.

Yashodhara: What a lot of knowledge I've obtained from Aryaputra in this short while! It's my good fortune that I got a husband like you.

Bodhisattva: And isn't it my good fortune that I got an understanding wife like you? Be that as it may. It's very late, let's go to sleep.

(Curtain.)

### SCENE 3

(Place: Shuddhodana's field. It is the day of *vapra-mangala* and Gotami is looking after the meal arrangements. Yashodhara is busy cooking, along with other women.)

Gotami: Yashodhara, could you come here? (Yashodhara leaves her work and goes to Gotami.) Look, you have no need to exert yourself so much. There are plenty of women workers. I have brought you here only so as to acquaint you with our own custom of *vapra-mangala*.

Yashodhara: Aryaa, look at Aryaputra—how hard he's working. He has been driving the plough without any rest.

Gotami: Look, we keep on telling him not to exert himself so much. But he just doesn't listen. He says he wants to become a real farmer. He doesn't approve of simply supervising while the labourers do all the work.

Yashodhara: In that case, shouldn't I emulate him?

Gotami: You've come into our family just this year. People will blame us as heartless parents-in-law who make such a delicate young woman do all the work.

Yashodhara: People will talk anyway. If I don't work, they'll say, 'Look, her husband is working hard in the fields, and she is sitting at ease like a queen.' But I don't want to think of other people; I want to think of myself. Just as Aryaputra is diligent in farm work, I must be diligent in housework.

Gotami: Look, you're quite diligent already. No one can spin cotton wool like you in our entire town of Lumbini. And everybody likes your cooking. All I am saying is that you shouldn't exert yourself too much.

Yashodhara: I'm not exerting myself too much at all. And I enjoy my exertions. I'm emulating Aryaputra; what's wrong with that?

(Curtain.)

(It is almost evening. The *vapra-mangala* is over and people are about to go home. Enter a *dasi* and Yashodhara.)

Yashodhara: Do you know where Aryaputra is?

Dasi: Yes, Madam. Come, I will show you. (They walk on. Bodhisattva is sitting in meditation under the *jambhul* tree. She points him out with her right hand.) Madam, look; he is sitting under the *jambhul* tree.

Yashodhara: Come, let's go there.

Dasi: No, Madam. It's forbidden to go there. He has instructed everyone not to disturb him except for urgent work. You shouldn't go there either, and you should keep your voice down.

Yashodhara: All right, you can go. I shall stay here until Aryaputra gets up from his samadhi.

(Exit *dasi*. Yashodhara brings some grass from the ground nearby, spreads it, and sits on it. Bodhisattva wakes up from his meditation after a while. He sees Yashodhara, gets up from his seat, and approaches her. She gets up.)

Bodhisattva: What are you doing here?

Yashodhara: Why, am I also forbidden to come here?

Bodhisattva: No one's forbidden. I've only told the labourers not to come to me except for urgent work. Father and Mother also know this.

Yashodhara: I too heard it from a *dasi*. But I sat here in order to watch Aryaputra's face in meditation. How happy I was to see it! But Aryaputra, why did you not tell me about this? Don't I have the right to enter the path of yoga?

Bodhisattva: Come along, let's sit on that platform and talk. (They go to the platform under the *jambhul* tree and sit down.) You have come into our family this year. Had I told you about samadhi right away, wouldn't you have been confused?

Yashodhara: Not at all. I would've tried right away to share your happiness.

Bodhisattva: But what's the problem now? I watch you work. You do it so well because you concentrate on your work. It's this concentration that is known as samadhi.

Yashodhara: But you too concentrate on your work. Why then do you come here and sit in meditation?

Bodhisattva: This is a specific kind of samadhi. It's related to the universe.

Yashodhara: Then why don't you teach me?

Bodhisattva: Look, I would like to teach it not only to you, but to the whole world. But I don't have the capacity. My knowledge is insufficient. And if I try to become a guru even so, wouldn't that be ridiculous?

Yashodhara: Don't teach other people; but why not teach me?

Bodhisattva: Fine. Look at that scene. The Himalayan peaks in the north, the setting sun in the west, and the beautiful forest greenery all around. If you look at all this with rapt attention, doesn't it produce a feeling of love in you?

Yashodhara: Yes, absolutely. I feel like immersing myself in it.

Bodhisattva: And is this love and engrossment related to self-interest—one's own, or one's family's or one's caste's self-interest?

Yashodhara: No, it is without expectation of return.

Bodhisattva: And that's why it is universal. To become engrossed in such boundless love is the highest kind of samadhi. But when we think about any particular creature, we suddenly develop a feeling of self

and other. We keep cats and dogs as pets, and love them; but we hate animals like tigers and lions, and absolutely abhor even the sight of a snake. As far as human beings are concerned, we love our friends and relatives, and hate our enemies. If we are to love all these creatures without expectation of return, we should cross the boundary of self and other. This isn't easy. It's easy to feel friendship for a friend; but the mind refuses to transfer the same feeling to an enemy. That's why one should first develop a firm feeling of friendship towards oneself, one's friends and one's neutral acquaintances, and then carry it over to one's enemies. When we destroy the sense of distinction among these four categories—oneself, one's friends, one's neutral acquaintances, and one's enemies—when we cross these boundaries, our friendship becomes universal. Then we experience pure samadhi and derive unprecedented happiness.

Yashodhara: But how should one begin this meditation?

Bodhisattva: At first a woman should direct this feeling towards a woman friend, and a man towards a male friend. One should wish one's friend to be as happy as oneself. When this feeling is firmly fixed, one should direct the feeling towards a neutral acquaintance; that is easily done. Then one should think thus of an enemy: 'It is only my imagination that this is my enemy, all men in the world are equal, it is our feelings of anger and hatred that make some appear to be our friends and some our enemies, and if anger and hatred are dispelled, there is no friend and no foe—all are friends.' In this manner one should develop a feeling of friendship towards all human beings. Thereafter, one should proceed gradually to a house, a town, a city, a country—and develop a feeling of friendship towards all creatures in the world. One should continuously harbour the thought that all creatures should be happy.

(Curtain.)

#### SCENE 4

Sutraddhar: Bodhisattva has become an expert in agriculture and Shakyas Shuddhodana has handed over all the work to him, although he does everything in consultation with his father. He is now twenty, and Shuddhodana had brought him to Kapilavastu with the intention of admitting him as a member of the Shakyas Sangha so that he can retire himself. (Exit.)

(Place: The Shakyas town hall in the city of Kapilavastu. This is an imposing hall where the meetings of the Shakyas Sangha are held. Near the western wall is a platform; on it sits the Maharaja or president of the Shakyas on a good seat in the centre, to his right sits the priest, to his left the army chief, and a dozen Shakyas leaders all around. The floor of the platform and the floor below is made of earth but has been polished smooth. On the lower floor are spread simple woollen seats on which sit the Shakyas kings from all the towns. Shuddhodana and Gotama sit near the platform. It is afternoon. The curtain opens.)

Shuddhodana (standing up and joining his palms together): I request the Shakyas Sangha that my Gotama may please be admitted as a member of the Sangha and that I may be permitted to retire.

Shakyas Senapati: Shakyas brothers, Gotama is now twenty and he is adept in all kinds of work. I propose that he should be admitted as a member of our Sangha. He who opposes this should speak out now. (After waiting a while) I request for the second time that he who opposes the admission of Gotama should speak out. (After a while) And now I request for the third time that he who wants to oppose the proposal should speak out. (After waiting a while) It is the custom of the Sangha that if no one objects even after a proposal is made three times, the proposal is deemed to be accepted. I assume that the Sangha has consented to the proposal through its silence, and declare that Gotama has been admitted as a member of the Shakyas Sangha from today. (Shuddhodana sits.)

Shakyas Purohit: O Gotama (he stands up), today the Shakyas Sangha has admitted you as a member and honoured you. Therefore your first duty is to exert yourself for the good of the Shakyas by dedicating your body, mind, and wealth. Second, you should not be lazy in the matter of attending meetings of the Sangha. Third, if you see any fault in any member of the Sangha, you should point it out in a non-partisan and humble manner to the Sangha, without hanging back. Fourth, if a member of the Sangha makes a charge against you, you should not be angry. If you have made a mistake, you should admit it; if you have not, you should offer an explanation. These are your four major duties. Let me tell you about the four proscriptions. He who molests any woman at all cannot remain in the Sangha as a member. He who commits murder or abortion cannot remain in the Sangha as a member. He who commits theft cannot remain as a member of the

Sangha. He who bears false witness cannot remain as a member of the Sangha. There are other duties and proscriptions, major and minor, which you should learn from the elders in the Sangha; and you should keep abreast of the changes made in these rules.

Bodhisattva: I know well the duties and proscriptions you have described. And I have also learnt the rules of the Shakyas Sangha. I shall try most sincerely to conduct myself accordingly. (He sits down.)

Shuddhodana (standing up): I thank the Shakyas Sangha for making Gotama a member. And now I request the Sangha to permit me to retire.

Shakya Senapati: This, our brother Shuddhodana, is asking for permission to retire from the Sangha. He who opposes this should speak out. (After making the same announcement twice more) No one has objected even after I made the announcement three times, therefore I assume that Shuddhodana's request has been unanimously granted. The Sangha grants the request through its silence.

Shakya Maharaja: Shuddhodana, I congratulate you. In accordance with our Kshatriya tradition one should retire after passing on all authority to one's son when he comes of age and proves himself capable. Now I request the Sangha that I too may be permitted to retire after selecting a suitable young man to fill my position.

Shakya Senapati: Brothers, our Maharaj is asking for permission to retire. If anyone wants to say anything in this regard, let him speak out.

Shuddhodana: I am no longer a member of the Sangha. However, a retired member has the right to advise the Sangha. Therefore, I wish to say a few words.

Shakya Maharaja: Feel free to do so.

Shuddhodana: If you retire with the consent of the Sangha, the Sangha does not have full rights to select a new Maharaja in your place. If the Sangha selects someone and the King of Kosala does not approve of the selection, that person cannot become the Maharaja. And both he and the Sangha would be humiliated. Instead, four or five names should be unanimously sent to the King of Kosala who would then select the one whom he favours. This would protect the honour of the Sangha.

Shakya Senapati: Shuddhodana's suggestion is worth considering. Therefore I suggest that Maharaj should withdraw his request for the

time being and that it should be considered at the next meeting.

Shakya Maharaja: I withdraw my request in accordance with the Senapati's suggestion. The matter will be considered at the next meeting.

Shakya Senapati: Maharaj has withdrawn his request. He who wants to say anything in this regard should speak out. (After making the announcement three times) Nobody has said anything after the announcement has been made three times. Therefore I assume that the Sangha approves of this act of Maharaj and gives its consent.

(Curtain.)

### ACT III

#### SCENE I

Sutradhar: Eight years have passed since Bodhisattva became a member of the Shakyas Sangha. He performs his duties to the Sangha as diligently as he performs his domestic duties. He does not like the disputes between the Shakyas and the Koliyas; but they are on the rise and there are clear signs of an impending war between them. Bodhisattva is trying hard to avoid this war. A meeting of the Shakyas Sangha is to take place shortly, which is why he has come to Kapilavastu. (Exit.)

(Place: The drawing room of Shakya Mahanama. A number of young men are gathered there, including some members of the Shakyas Sangha.)

Mahanama (addressing all): You all know that the disputes between us and the Koliyas have reached an extreme and there are clear signs that they'll end in war. Gotama opposes such a civil war. He may be younger than me in age, but he's older in wisdom. I have invited him here to explain his position. I hope you'll give his views due thought.

Bodhisattva: You do agree, don't you, that the Shakyas and the Koliyas are brothers?

A Young Man: Are we to put up with their harassment because they're our brothers?

Bodhisattva: Who has decided that it's all their fault? And even if they're the offenders to an extent, shouldn't we, the Shakyas, forgive them as the older branch?

Second Young Man: But they should come to us to beg forgiveness.

Bodhisattva: The custom is that the older person should beg forgiveness first. If we follow it and beg forgiveness first for our mistakes, I feel sure that the Koliyas would at once climb down and beg our forgiveness.

Third Young Man: Only if the Koliyas send their five elders here and beg forgiveness from the Shakya Sangha would this war be averted.

First Young Man: Is there no compromise other than begging forgiveness?

Bodhisattva: Yes, there is. The Shakyas and the Koliyas should select five elders each and settle this dispute. This is the resolution I'm going to propose at the Sangha meeting tomorrow. Will you support it?

Second Young Man: I can't commit myself just now. I shall decide tomorrow after gauging the mood of the Sangha.

Bodhisattva: All right. Mahanama, at least you will support me, won't you?

Mahanama: Gotama, you know that I'm quite averse to this dispute. But I can't promise that I shall vote in your favour. After the death of my revered father, I have to bear all the family responsibilities. Anuruddha is young and immature, and his mother's darling. If I oppose the Sangha and it ousts me, you can just imagine what my mother would go through. Even so, I'm eager to do whatever I can to work out a compromise.

Bodhisattva: All of you can vote as you like, I'm not worried. I shall propose my resolution and stick to it.

Mahanama: But have you thought of what would befall Aunt Gotami, Uncle Shuddhodana, and Yashodhara?

Bodhisattva: I would never hesitate to sacrifice everything for the welfare and happiness of the Shakyas and the Koliyas.

Mahanama: Wouldn't this be obstinate insistence on your part?

Bodhisattva: Why do you call it obstinate insistence? Call it insistence on the truth—satyagraha—if you wish, or love for the truth.

(Curtain.)

## SCENE 2

(Place: The town hall of the Shakyas. Most members are present because the question of whether or not to declare war against the Koliyas is to be settled today. Young Bhadriya has taken the place of the aged

Shakya Maharaja. He is a good man, but that is not the only reason why he has been selected. The King of Kosala approved his selection because he is of a respectable lineage.)

Shakya Senapati: Brothers, you know that there has been friction between us and the Koliyas over the water of River Rohini for many years now. A few days ago, our *dasas* and labourers were letting the river water into our channels when the Koliya *dasas* and labourers beat them up. Then we sent guards there, but the Koliyas attacked them as well so that they had to retreat. Now there's no way out for us except to unite and attack the Koliyas. Therefore I propose the resolution that the Shakya Sangha should declare war against the Koliyas and defeat them. He who disapproves of the resolution should speak out.

Bodhisattva: I request permission of the Sangha to speak about the resolution.

Shakya Senapati: Speak, by all means.

Bodhisattva: The Sangha should not be in a hurry to declare war against the Koliyas. First of all, there should be a proper inquiry into who is at fault and to what extent. I have heard that our *dasas* and labourers attacked the Koliya *dasas* and labourers when they were leading water into their fields. If this is true, then we are also at fault.

Shakya Senapati: This is true. But it was our turn to take water, and that is why our servants were aggressive.

Bodhisattva: This means that we're not totally without fault either. That's why I propose the resolution that we should select two elders as should the Koliyas, and these four should select a chief elder. Those five should settle the case by a majority vote.

Mahanama: I second the resolution. It's best to settle the matter among ourselves.

Shakya Senapati: But I oppose this resolution. My subordinate officers have decided that these disputes would not end until we attack and utterly defeat the Koliyas. The stick-holder should distribute the sticks and take a vote on the resolution.

Stick-holder: Now I shall distribute the sticks. He who wishes to support the resolution should take a white stick and he who wishes to oppose it should take a red one. (He distributes the sticks, takes them back, counts them, and says) There are 305 red sticks and 112 white ones.

Shakya Senapati: Gotama's resolution has been defeated with a great majority. Now I propose my resolution to the Sangha again. The Sangha should grant permission to declare war. Whoever wants to say anything about this should speak out.

Bodhisattva: I request the Shakya Sangha not to agree to this resolution, because the Koliyas are our relatives, and we theirs. It is not proper for us to destroy one another.

Shakya Purohit: In war Kshatriyas should not distinguish between relatives and non-relatives. Brahmins propound that they should fight for their kingdom even against brothers. Ritual sacrifice is the natural duty of Brahmins, war of Kshatriyas, agriculture and trade of Vaishyas, and service of Shudras. Conduct in accordance with this is meritorious, and conduct against it sinful. This is the eternal law.

Bodhisattva: This is not at all the eternal law. Among Brahmins there have been warriors like Drona, and there are still some today. Among Kshatriyas there have been learned men like Janaka, and there are still some today. Vyasa was the son of a fisherwoman and his father was an untouchable. The Sage Matang was a Chandala by caste. How then can one claim that the caste distinctions which are just about to become prevalent are the eternal law? Enmity does not appease enmity, love appeases it; this is the true eternal law.

Shakya Senapati: There is no need to enter into this argument. The main issue is that Gotama opposes my resolution. Therefore the stick-holder should distribute the sticks and take a vote.

Stick-holder: I shall distribute the sticks again. Those who oppose the resolution should take white sticks and those who support it should take red ones. (He distributes sticks, collects them again, counts them, and says) There are 312 red sticks and 105 white ones.

Shakya Senapati: The resolution has been passed by a strong majority. Accordingly, I command that all able-bodied Shakyas above twenty and below fifty should prepare for war.

Bodhisattva: I don't wish to take part in this war.

Shakya Senapati: In that case, you will break your oath and will be censured.

Bodhisattva: My oath is to dedicate my body, mind, and wealth to the welfare of the Shakyas. But a war with the Koliyas is not beneficial

to the Shakyas. This internal feud has led to our losing the total freedom we possessed. We aren't totally free even to select our Maharaja. And this war will give the King of Kosala a good opportunity to interfere even in our internal administration. I don't mind if people censure me. What does public censure matter compared to the welfare of the Shakyas and the Koliyas?

Shakya Senapati: This rhetoric of yours is of no use. You have to obey the laws of the Sangha, otherwise you will be dealt with suitably. You probably think that the Shakya Sangha has no power to prescribe death or exile as punishment, and that if we seek the permission of the King of Kosala in this matter, there will be an inquiry and we will be rendered ridiculous. But remember that we can ostracise your family and confiscate your lands. That does not require permission from the King of Kosala. If we do that, are you going to petition the King of Kosala?

Bodhisattva: I request the Sangha to punish me with death or exile, and I promise not to petition the King of Kosala against it. But do not ostracise our family or confiscate our lands and render us all destitute. Let me alone suffer whatever punishment you want.

Shakya Senapati: Even if we punish you with death or exile and even if you accept it without complaint, how would the news not reach the King of Kosala? If we implement either one of these punishments without his permission, would it not give him an easy opportunity to destroy our remaining freedom?

Bodhisattva: If that is the case, I accept exile voluntarily. I shall become a religious mendicant and leave this country voluntarily.

Shakya Senapati: But would you get your parents' permission for this?

Bodhisattva: I shall try to reason with them. But whether or not they give their permission, I promise the Sangha that I shall leave this country quickly.

Mahanama: I request permission to say a few words about this.

Shakya Senapati: The Sangha grants you permission. Say what you want.

Mahanama: I have no doubt that Gotama will keep his promise. But if a war between the Shakyas and the Koliyas starts just now, the



news will spread that Gotama went into exile only in order to avert it. And when the King of Kosala hears it, I fear that he will interfere in our administration. That's why we should not go to war just yet, but wait a few days for a compromise, and go to war only if a compromise seems impossible.

Shakya Senapati: I agree with this suggestion. Therefore I propose a resolution that Gotama should leave the Shakya country within a week, and we should then look for a suitable opportunity to attack the Koliyas. (After this resolution is announced three times) No one has objected even when the resolution was announced three times, therefore I assume that the Sangha has accepted it by remaining silent.

(Curtain.)

### SCENE 3

(Place: King Shuddhodana's drawing room, in the morning. Shuddhodana is seated, and to his left Gotami. Udayi and some other young Shakyas are seated before them on both sides. Bodhisattva enters, greets his parents with a namaskar, and sits on one side.)

Bodhisattva: Father, Mahanama must have recounted what transpired yesterday in the Shakya Sangha. That's why I had sent him ahead.

Shuddhodana: We had already discussed this war. But I had no idea that you would go to such an extreme.

Bodhisattva: I myself didn't imagine that things would come to this pass. I had thought that I would be able to persuade the Shakya Sangha with my reasoning. But our officialdom had already excited our people, so that my reasoning was useless. Even so, I refused to abandon the law of the Truth. Naturally the Sangha was compelled to penalize me, and I applied the penalty to myself.

Shuddhodana: But can you spare no thought for us—what our condition will be?

Bodhisattva: That thought is precisely what made me plan to become a religious mendicant. Wouldn't our family be reduced to dire straits if the Sangha attached our lands?

Shuddhodana: Look, if you renounce the country, what are our lands and our house worth? Wouldn't it be better for all of us to renounce the country?

Gotami: Child, I beg of you not to leave us. (She starts shedding tears.)

Bodhisattva: Mother, don't be so impulsive. You are a Kshatriya woman, it doesn't become you to feel so wretched. Would you have grieved so much if I had gone to war?

Gotami: We have heard from childhood that fighting is the moral duty of Kshatriyas. And if you had returned from the battlefield defeated, I would've hung my head in shame. But now you'll become an ascetic and wander about in forests, while we sit here worrying about you! Better by far that you take us with you, as 'he' says.

Bodhisattva: Where will I take you? Nanda is young, and Rahul is a newborn. How would you leave them and accompany me? We can seek shelter with the King of Kosala; but wouldn't that be shameful? Would our Shakya brothers not call us traitors? It's true that I would have to wander through forests. But isn't that better than killing Koliyas? If I can discover how human society can free itself from mutual killing, how much mankind would benefit!

Udayi: Gotama, what an excellent idea! But it's futile to hope that mankind would benefit from this discovery of yours. Parshwanath's religion has prevailed now for two hundred years. But has it put a stop to our quarrels and fights?

Bodhisattva: You're right. But had Parshwanath not propagated his Religion of the Four Conquests, would any goodness be seen in this Middle Region at all? Wouldn't war have been our principal religion? One has to discover a new religious path in accordance with the teaching of Parshwanath and other holy men—a religious path that is suited to the present conditions.

Mahanama: Leave aside this argument about religion. At the moment all we need to consider is how to avert this calamity that has befallen Gotama. The Shakya Sangha has postponed war for a week. And it may not take place at all. This being the case, can't we reason with the Shakya Sangha and keep Gotama at home?

Bodhisattva: Mahanama, I'm really grateful to you for your friendship. But give up the thought of keeping me at home. And remember that it was when I promised to become a religious mendicant that the Shakya Sangha was persuaded and war postponed. And it may be averted altogether when I renounce the country. But if I break my promise, it will have an entirely undesirable effect. Therefore you should all permit me to leave the country, instead of preventing me.

(All hang their heads sadly and remain sitting. Curtain.)

## SCENE 4

(Place: Yashodhara's room. She is lying in bed, with Rahul beside her. An oil lamp burns in a corner. A *dasi* named Rewati is sleeping on the floor near the bed. The night is well advanced.)

Yashodhara: Rewati, you had said that Aryaputra is to come. Why hasn't he come yet?

Rewati: His friends have come, and Aryaputra was busy talking to them. I can remind him again, if you wish.

Yashodhara: No, absolutely not. He'll come. I'm so impatient, that's why I think he is late.

(Enter Bodhisattva. The *dasi* gets up and stands on one side. Yashodhara tries to get up. Bodhisattva quickly comes close and takes her hand.)

Bodhisattva: Yashodhara, don't try to get up. (He releases her hand, brings a low stool close to her bed, and sits on it. Yashodhara turns on her right side. He strokes her hair.) I received your message in the evening and you must have received my message that I'll come late at night. I was talking to my friends, and some of them dined with us. I saw them off and came here exactly on time!

Yashodhara: Yes, you came on time, but for me each moment seemed like a day—so eager was I! The whole day there are women who come to inquire after me, which is why I called you here at night—and became impatient when night fell!

Bodhisattva: I too was eager to tell you of all the happenings at Kapilavastu, but had no time the whole day.

Yashodhara: I know everything that happened at Kapilavastu.

Bodhisattva (amazed): But how?

Yashodhara: This morning I had sent Rewati to see whether you had arrived. At the time Mahanama was telling Father-in-law the news from Kapilavastu. Then you came. She saw and heard everything from behind the door, and reported to me the entire conversation word for word—complete with the accompanying gestures!

Bodhisattva: If she's so clever, you should have freed her from bondage long ago.

Yashodhara: I've told her so frequently. But she says, 'Where can I go? This house is all I have. If you send me away, I'll have to commit suicide!'

Bodhisattva: That's not her fault. Long experience makes a person love even bondage! Let that be. Now I only want to ask you this: are you angry with me because of my plan to become a religious mendicant?

Yashodhara: Had I been in your place, what would I have done differently? I would never have been prepared to fight against my relatives.

Bodhisattva: But Mother and Father are grieving.

Yashodhara: That's natural. Their love for you knows no bounds.

Bodhisattva: In that case, one concludes that you do not love me!

Yashodhara: Now you are teasing me. Of course I love you deeply. But my love can't be unrestrained, because it is tempered by my conscience. And isn't this the result of your company? I'm your wife and also your disciple.

Bodhisattva: Bravo, Yashodhara! It's my great good fortune that I got a deeply thoughtful wife like you. I have no doubt any longer that in my absence you'll conduct yourself with great courage. If you are not happy here, you can go to your parents—

Yashodhara: What are you saying? I shall never go to my parents' home. And if I do, I shall never stay there more than five or six days. And why shouldn't I be happy here? There are so many things to do. There is Rahul, of course; and also household work. And this is the time to serve Mother-in-law and Father-in-law. Stop worrying about me. Don't let there be any obstacle in your religious quest. I am convinced that you will discover the true Dharma and that you will return victorious. The Shakyas and the Koliyas will come to realise that there is at least one great person among them who is guided by the love of truth. Your true bravery will make them feel remorse, and I hope that they too will abandon their internal feuds.

Bodhisattva: I feel dejected about these feuds, because I have no capacity to stop them. But apart from these, there are so many other quarrels in human society. It is essential to discover their origins and whether man can liberate himself from them. If I can discover this, you could say that I've succeeded in my quest.

Yashodhara: But that alone will not be the fulfilment of your duties. For the welfare of mankind, you'll have to propound that discovery—that good path—to all.

Bodhisattva: These things are for the future. I don't harbour the ambition of becoming a religious preacher. Let that be. You are very

tired now, and need rest. So let's not talk more. I shall go to Kapilavastu tomorrow. There I shall be initiated in the ashram of Sage Alara Kalama, and then leave the country. Mother and Father will accompany me, I think. But there will be people here to look after you.

Yashodhara: Let me tell you again—stop worrying about me. May your path be a happy one.

(Bodhisattva leaves the room looking at her. Curtain.)

(Place: Shuddhodana's house. It is afternoon and Yashodhara is sitting on the bed in her room. Rahul is sleeping in a cradle, and Rewati is rocking it. A *dasi* enters.)

Dasi: Madam, Lord Udayi has come from Kapilavastu. He wishes to see you.

Yashodhara: Rewati, go to the inner veranda and arrange the seats. And ask Udayi to come there.

(Rewati exits and returns.)

Rewati: Madam, he is sitting inside.

Yashodhara: All right. Look after Rahul, and tell me if he wakes up.

Rewati: Madam, he has just fallen asleep, now he won't wake up for at least an hour. But I'll be stay here, and if he wakes up, I'll bring him to you.

(Yashodhara exits through the door and comes into the veranda. On seeing her, Udayi gets up and comes forward to greet her. Yashodhara goes and sits on a seat.)

Yashodhara: Udayi, come and sit on this seat opposite me. (He does so.) What did you do in Kapilavastu all these days? Aryaputra was initiated and went on to the Kosala country, and the next day Father-in-law and Mother-in-law returned home. But tell me first—how did Aryaputra's initiation go?

Udayi: Did Mother Gotami not give you an account of it?

Yashodhara: She said, 'A lot of people had gathered there. But we two were not conscious of what they said and what they did.' All they know is that Aryaputra left Kapilavastu as soon as the initiation ceremony was over. Her grief and Father-in-law's hasn't subsided yet.

Udayi: Tears were constantly streaming from their eyes at the time; no wonder they were not conscious of what was happening. You would've been reduced to the same state, had you been there.

Yashodhara: No, Udayi, you are wrong there. I would've congratulated Aryaputra, and had it been possible, I too would've become a

religious mendicant and left the country with him. But there is Rahul to think of! Let that be. Now give me a detailed account of what happened there.

Udayi: In the afternoon Gotama mounted his horse Kanthaka and rode towards the ashram of Sage Kalama. Chhanna followed him. The citizens of Kapilavastu had already started out to attend Gotama's initiation. As soon as they saw Gotama, they stopped him and showered him with flowers and rice grains. And a procession formed in front of Kanthaka and behind. On reaching the ashram, the procession stopped. Everybody went and stood in an orderly fashion in the compound of the ashram. Normally such an initiation ceremony would be attended by ten or twenty people. But on this occasion, the whole compound of the ashram was filled with the men and women of Kapilavastu.

Yashodhara: But how did so many people gather?

Udayi: Why, what's so surprising? All citizens were eager to see the young man who did satyagraha against the entire Shakyas Sangha and who was prepared to gladly endure the punishment.

Yashodhara: All right. What happened next?

Udayi: Mother Gotami and Father Shuddhodana had already gone to the ashram. Gotama dismounted Kanthaka, made his way through the crowd, and touched their feet. Those two drenched him with their tears—almost like the water that drips on the image of a deity. Just then Chhanna came in weeping, having tethered Kanthaka to a tree. Gotama took him aside, changed into the ochre clothes that Mahanama had got ready for him, and handed over his original clothes and ornaments to Chhanna. He had his head shaven there and started going into the ashram. The sight brought tears to the eyes of many of the assembled men and women—what to speak of Father Shuddhodana and Mother Gotami! Some citizens said, 'The Shakyas Sangha had made this good man into a sacrificial victim!!'

Yashodhara: Deities want sacrificial victims, and so does human society! Had Aryaputra not sacrificed himself, he would've had to sacrifice many Koliyas in war.

Udayi: With his own sacrifice, he saved many Shakyas and Koliyas from becoming sacrificial victims.

Yashodhara: How so?

Udayi: That's what I want to tell you. Hold on.

Yashodhara: All right. What happened then?

Udayi: Bharadwaj, the chief disciple of Sage Kalama, and four resident *shramanas* from the ashram performed Gotama's initiation ceremony with due care. After that Gotama quietly left the ashram. Many young Shakyas walked quite a distance to see him off; Chhanna and I also went with them. Gotama stopped at a stream and said, 'Brothers, there is no point in your coming further. I was unable to end the quarrel between the Shakyas and the Koliyas; but you can achieve that if you are able to influence public opinion. Therefore you should go back and try to arouse public opinion in such a manner that the minds of the Shakyas and the Koliyas become receptive and their quarrel can be internally settled.' At these words, they all turned back. But Chhanna did not stop following Gotama. I didn't return home with Father Shuddhodana, but stayed on in Kapilavastu just to see what the young Shakyas would do.

Yashodhara: And what did they do?

Udayi: The next day they gathered all the girls and boys in the city, and took out a large procession. They went through the whole city and shouted slogans like, 'An internal feud is wrong', 'The Koliyas are our brothers', and 'Think of Gotama's sacrifice'. The result was that the very next day the Shakya Sangha called a meeting and it was unanimously decided that our elders should be sent to the Koliyas.

Yashodhara: This is exactly what Aryaputra had suggested.

Udayi: He had proposed a resolution to that effect. But the Shakya Sangha wanted a sacrificial victim!

Yashodhara: Then what happened?

Udayi: When the Koliyas heard of this, they too selected their elders. A meeting of the elders on both sides was held in the city of Haridravasana and it was unanimously decided that a permanent committee should be appointed to regulate the water of the River Rohini. If a dispute arises, this committee should inquire into it and settle it. Two officers, representing the Shakyas and the Koliyas, should work under this committee in order to supervise the *dasas* and labourers. The matter was settled in this fashion and a dreadful war averted. So the Shakyas and Koliyas are celebrating. This must be regarded as a victory celebration for Gotama's sacrifice!

Yashodhara: Aryaputra will be delighted to hear this news. This must be regarded as a very auspicious beginning to his religious quest.

(Rewati enters with Rahul.)

Udayi: Rahul seems to have got up.

Yashodhara: He has had a long sleep. All right, I shall go now. Whenever you receive any news of Aryaputra, do let me know at once. (She gets up, and so does Udayi.)

Udayi: All right. Let me take my leave.  
(Curtain.)

## ACT IV

### SCENE 1

Sutrardhar: Bodhisattva left the Shakya country and came to the ashram of Alara Kalama in the Kosala country. He stayed there for four months and studied Kalama's doctrine thoroughly; but it did not satisfy him. He then went to the ashram of Udraka Ramaputra. Ramaputra's doctrine was not very different from Kalama's, and it too failed to satisfy him. After spending two months in the ashram, he is now on his way to Rajagriha. Just as Takshashila is the centre of Brahmin culture, so is Rajagriha about to become the centre of *shramana* culture, because King Bimbisara greatly honours *shramanas*. He has donated large parks in the vicinity of Rajagriha for the accommodation of different *shramana* sects. The leaders of the *shramanas* wander about everywhere with their sanghas, preaching. But they come frequently to Rajagriha, and stay here during the four rainy months. That is why Bodhisattva is on his way there to study their doctrines.

(Exit.)

(Place: The woods at the foot of the Pandava Hill in Rajagriha. It is evening and Bodhisattva is sitting with Kaundinya, Ashwajit, Vaashpa [Vappa] Mahanama, and Bhadraka—known as the group of five monks.)

Kaundinya (to Bodhisattva): I saw you this morning going around begging for food. We had already heard the news that you had become a religious mendicant and gone to Kalama's ashram. Why did you leave the ashram and come here?

Bodhisattva: Do you know why I left home?

Kaundinya: Because you didn't want to be part of the quarrel between the Shakyas and the Koliyas; isn't that so? But the quarrel has been resolved. Why then didn't you return to your homeland?

Bodhisattva: It's true that the quarrel has been resolved. But quarrels

of different kinds go on all the time among men. I wanted to see whether or not we can free ourselves from these. That's why I became Kalama's disciple and studied his doctrine. He taught me all four meditations and then three *aayatanas*. I became adept at all these. But that did not satisfy me. When we sit in meditation, all our quarrels cease for us for the duration of the meditation. But that doesn't mean that we have obtained the means of resolving all quarrels. That's why I left Kalama's ashram. Even though Kalama had offered me leadership of his sangha, I didn't accept it. Then I went to Udraka Ramaputra. He taught me the eighth step of samadhi. He also offered me leadership of his sangha, but I didn't accept it, because his doctrine did not satisfy me either. Then I left his ashram and came here. Now tell me, what did all of you do after you renounced your homes?

Ashwajit: Gotama, you know already that our renunciation has nothing to do with people's quarrels. We renounced our homes because our domestic unhappiness became difficult to endure. We did not stay long in the ashrams of Kalama and Ramaputra. We came here to hear the doctrines of great leaders of sanghas.

Bodhisattva: So did you study these doctrines?

Ashwajit: Yes, we understood most of the doctrines, and found many contradictions among them.

Bodhisattva: What contradictions?

Ashwajit: The largest sect here is that of the Ajivakas. They had two *jinas* earlier, and at present they say that Maskari Goshala is a *jina*. He says that the soul reaches perfection through destiny, company, and a person's nature, and is then liberated only after passing through the cycle of eighty-four lakh great eras. On the contrary, Ajita Kesha-kambala claims that the soul is composed of the four great elements and is destroyed after death. Similarly the other sangha leaders hold mutually contradictory views.

Bodhisattva: Do you see sense in any one of these doctrines?

Ashwajit: Of all these, we find the Nirgranthas' doctrine of the Four Conquests worth accepting.

Bodhisattva: Yes, I know it. Our Uncle Vapra propounds it with great enthusiasm. If mankind sincerely accepts the Four Conquests—Non-violence, Truth, Not stealing, and Avoidance of possessions—all

the quarrels and disputes in the world will be totally eliminated and there will be peace and happiness.

Ashwajit: But the Nirgranthas claim that that's not enough—it's even better to practise austerities. The soul is partly permanent and partly impermanent. Austerities destroy a person's karma and he reaches perfection.

Bodhisattva: So what do you intend to do now?

Ashwajit: Considering that most *shramanas* attach importance to austerities, we are on our way to Uruvela to practise austerities. They say it's a lovely place, suitable for such a purpose. Why don't you come along with us?

Bodhisattva: Not just yet. Let me understand quite clearly the doctrines of all the sects here. And then if I find that I have to practise austerities, I too shall come to Uruvela.

All: Yes, do come; we'll practise austerities together.

(Curtain.)

## SCENE 2

(Place: Bodhisattva's hut at the foot of the Pandava Hill. Bodhisattva has done his round of begging for food, returned to his hut, had his meal, and is now sitting on a seat. King Bimbisara comes with a large entourage, leaves it at a distance from the hut, comes alone to the hut, and greets Bodhisattva with a namaskar. His servant brings a seat made of grass and places it at a distance from Bodhisattva.)

Bodhisattva: Maharaj, please be seated on this seat. (Bimbisara sits down.)

Bimbisara: Venerable Sir, this morning when you went past my mansion on your round of begging for food, I saw you from the terrace and thought that you were new to this city. That's why I sent some royal messengers to find your hut and came here. I'm eager to meet any new *shramana* who comes to my capital. I would like to know which sect you belong to.

Bodhisattva: I belong to no sect. I've come here in order to understand the teaching of all sects.

Bimbisara: Where have you come from? What's your caste?

Bodhisattva: There are two Kshatriya sanghas, the Shakyas and the

Kolias, to the north of the Kosala country, at the foot of the Himalayas. I was born in the Shakya clan.

Bimbisara: I have heard of the Shakyas. If you were born in that great Kshatriya clan, why did you become a *shramana* at such a young age?

Bodhisattva: The main reason for my initiation was the dispute between the Shakyas and the Kolias. These disputes are old and have led to our losing our freedom. The internal administration is still in our hands, but we may lose even that if the disputes continue.

Bimbisara: The republics are reduced to such a state everywhere. What a prosperous country, but such internal disputes! It was not in our interest to allow such fights on our borders. Now they blame us for having destroyed their freedom! Our Magadha was also a republic, but these quarrels made us establish monarchy. People are happy now. And if we try to give power to the republics again, the common people will oppose it! The Shakyas and the Kolias will reach the same stage. Why then did you feel so sad about something quite inevitable?

Bodhisattva: It's easy to surmise that the freedom of the Shakyas and the Kolias will gradually be lost. That wasn't the problem confronting me. I was a member of the Shakya Sangha. The Sangha declared war against the Kolias. I opposed it, and absolutely refused to bear weapons against the Kolias, because many of them are our relatives. I wasn't prepared to kill them. Naturally the Shakya Sangha was compelled to penalize me. But it would have needed the permission of the King of Kosala to exile me and that might have proved quite detrimental to the Shakyas. That's why I voluntarily became a religious mendicant and left the Shakya country.

Bimbisara: In a way it was a good thing that you left your country and came here. I need men like you. I have conquered the Angas, but treat them like the Magadhans. *Shramanas* of all sects are honoured in my kingdom. I am always ready to treat young and old with justice and equality. But my kingdom has grown quite large and these tasks are increasingly beyond my power. I have some members of the royalty working for me, but most of them are afraid of me, and very few are sincere. Therefore I entreat you to stay with me and be a partner in administering my kingdom. Isn't it far better to try and make the masses

in my kingdom happy rather than exerting yourself for your personal salvation?

Bodhisattva: Maharaj, I'm grateful to you for the respect and generosity you have shown me. But I humbly ask you just one question—when you are so concerned with the welfare of your subjects, why do you need such a large entourage? It would be ridiculous for a Maharaja of a republic to keep such an entourage.

Bimbisara: It's quite proper that a Maharaja of a republic does not have a large entourage. There, if one Maharaja dies, another is selected at once. But here, if I'm killed through a conspiracy, there'll be terrible anarchy until someone else comes to the throne, and people will suffer a great deal. That's why protection of my person is as important as the protection of my kingdom.

Bodhisattva: But how can you be happy in such a condition?

Bimbisara: Towards that end I try other things: games in the park, water sports, ball sports, chariot rides, and nutritious food. All this gives me physical happiness—but not enough mental happiness. Because I see the danger of foul play everywhere. I fear that even my trusted servants would turn traitors!

Bodhisattva: In that case, one must say that monarchy is not very advantageous!

Bimbisara: How so? If I am not prepared to bear this degree of mental restlessness, what would be the condition of the Angas and Magadhans? Would the rule of big fish eating little fish not apply everywhere? Therefore I think it right to bear these hardships for the sake of winning over the people.

Bodhisattva: Internal feuds seem to be destroying the republics totally, and there seems to be no alternative to monarchy. Among the monarchs, a liberal sovereign such as yourself is really beneficent to the subjects. But if an obsessive, cruel, and ignorant sovereign comes to the throne, the subjects would be in dire straits. At such times the subjects have to rebel, which leads to great harm. History bears witness to this. Second, your attempt to win over the people is based on fear and therefore not long-lasting. The moment the army loses a little strength, there would be looting, fighting, and rioting everywhere. How does a father win over his sons? He feeds them, talks to them affectionately,

gives them an education that will benefit them, and treats them as equals when they come of age. This means that his four ways of winning them over are generosity, affectionate words, economic capability, and equality. Can one not win people over with these four means?

Bimbisara: I've never thought about it. I'm so engrossed in the task of ruling that I find no time at all to think calmly. You are a *shramana*, which is why you have the time to think about such things.

Bodhisattva: That's the reason I became a religious mendicant. I want to solve the problem of resolving quarrels in society without violence. Would I be able to solve it if I serve you and get as engrossed in work as you are?

Bimbisara: No, that would require solitude. But have you understood the teaching of the famous *shramana* sects here?

Bodhisattva: That's the task I have been engaged in these past six months.

Bimbisara: Which of these doctrines do you like best?

Bodhisattva: That of the Nirgrantha sect. I already knew of their doctrine of the Four Conquests, because there are many of their followers in our country. After coming here I was able to compare that doctrine with those of others, and ultimately I think that that doctrine is the best.

Bimbisara: Then why don't you accept it?

Bodhisattva: I find one shortcoming in it.

Bimbisara: Which is?

Bodhisattva: The Nirgranthas propound that the soul is partly permanent and partly impermanent. I can't understand how the same entity can be permanent and impermanent. There are *shramanas* who claim that the soul is eternal and those who claim that it's not. Whose doctrine then is true and whose false? What is the result of these doctrines? Do they not confuse people? I don't think it right to enter any sect without giving due thought to these questions. All these doctrines favour austerities. Most of them propound that self-knowledge is impossible without austerities. That's why I have decided to go to Uruvela and practise austerities. I've spent six months in your kingdom. I'm happy to have met you today. I thank you.

Bimbisara: I do not wish to obstruct your great task. If you discover the means to achieve the welfare of mankind, I hope you'll give the

benefit of it to both the Angas and the Magadhans. Now I have to go—there are many bothersome tasks I have to deal with.

Bodhisattva: All right. (Bimbisara gets up, does namaskar to Bodhisattva, and turns away. His entourage comes forward to greet him. Curtain.)

### SCENE 3

Sutradhar: Now Bodhisattva has been practising austerities in the lovely region of Uruvela for about six years. As a result, his stomach has touched his back, his spine is clearly visible, his complexion has darkened, and he finds it very painful to get up and sit down. The group of five monks nurses him, and Sujata and her friends frequently bring him decoctions of lentils. They are also making sacred gifts and vows in order that he should survive the austerities. (Exit.)

(Place: Bodhisattva's small hut. It is morning and he is alone because the group of five monks has gone on their round to beg for food. Mara enters, disguised as an attractive man, playing a small lute.)

Mara (sings): Why, O why does he torment his body through all these austerities?

His life is ebbing away, Why . . .

He can rule, be happy, and enjoy life, Why . . .

He should perform rituals and sacrifice and drink Soma-rasa, Why . . .

That is the true path to heaven, Why . . .

Gotama, what a wretched state you have been reduced to! Why are you practising these austerities? Had you served Maharaj Bimbisara, what honours you would've enjoyed! You would've exercised power over all the Angas and Magadhans, and Bimbisara would have remained a Maharaja only in name! But that's your fate! You followed the wrong path. At least now you should return to Rajagriha and serve Bimbisara. It's best to follow the right path, no matter how late.

Bodhisattva: Who are you that feels such concern for me?

Mara: I live in this region and try to lead on the right path people like you who have gone astray and are practising austerities. As soon as I heard the painful news about you, I abandoned all my other work and came here.

Bodhisattva: But I don't think you will make headway here.

Mara: I don't care. I perform my duty sincerely. But try to look at your own body. I think you are almost on the point of death. That's why you should abandon this path. If you don't want to rule a kingdom, start a fire sacrifice right here. It will bring you religious merit the easy way. And I shall spread your fame through the surrounding towns. People, high and low, will come to you with all kinds of gifts. You'll be honoured. You'll become the most famous man in the country of Magadha, perform great sacrifices, and go to heaven after death!

Bodhisattva: I don't want such religious merit or heaven. You can preach to those who want them. Human beings are everywhere engaged in destroying one another out of greed and hatred. I'm trying to discover how they can be freed from this terrible sin. How then can I accept your counsel?

Mara: Look, if you insist on dying such a death, who am I to save you? If you can't liberate yourself, how can you liberate others? There have been many who harboured such false pride and who wandered around preaching the liberation of mankind! But what was the result? Human society is in exactly the same condition in which it has always been. Rather, their internal feuds have become stronger, and they'll become worse as weapons increase! Who are you to resolve them? One should look after oneself—why this unnecessary bother?

Bodhisattva: Look, you have distorted my words. I'm not trying to resolve the quarrels of the whole world; I'm trying to think about the ways and means of doing so. The physicians of former times have shown how a man can remain healthy by making certain changes in his diet and activities. This doesn't mean that they made everyone healthy. Those who followed their advice remained healthy, those who didn't fell prey to disease. I know my duty. So you should stop worrying about me and be concerned about yourself.

Mara: It's you and your fate—what more can I say? (Exits, playing his lute and singing. The five monks come one by one and sit quietly near Bodhisattva.)

Bodhisattva: Oh, when did you come?

Kaundinya: We returned from our begging round in town, had our meal in our hut, rinsed our bowls, and came here. And who was this singer who just left?

Bodhisattva: He calls himself the well-wisher of *shramanas*. He had come explicitly to make me give up austerities.

Kaundinya: What did he say?

Bodhisattva: He tried to give me a lot of advice, he praised the enjoyment of life, and when that proved futile, he extolled the importance of the sacred fire. When that didn't have any effect on me, he threatened me with impending death, and finally got bored and left! But I've been wondering for a long time now—what's the use of these austerities?

Kaundinya (astonished): What! The sages have been practising austerities for thousands of years—were they all ignorant?

Bodhisattva: I don't say that. Many of them were probably wise, and the rest only followed tradition. But how would my present task benefit from their austerities—or mine?

Kaundinya: Then you think that the Four Conquests are also useless?

Bodhisattva: Not at all. I think that peace and happiness can be established in the world by following the Four Conquests. Even if only the two Conquests of non-violence and truth are propagated everywhere, the quarrels among the people will be considerably reduced. But along with them, the principles of not stealing and also avoiding possessions should be propagated. If thefts continue, how can non-violence and truth last? Avoidance of possessions is also essential. If some people obtain wealth through non-violent and truthful means and cherish it, the poor will feel envious and try to steal or wrest their wealth by force. How can such a society sustain the rule of not stealing? The rich will protect their possessions with weapons or with the help of untruth. How then can truth and non-violence exist in such a society? This means that all four Conquests have to be propagated in equal measure.

Kaundinya: But if these four Conquests are not accompanied by austerities, how can the soul reach perfection?

Bodhisattva: It's no use entering into a discussion of the soul.

Kaundinya: Now you're going to the extreme! If one is not to discuss the soul, all our efforts can be said to be in vain!

Bodhisattva: What I'm saying is that there's no need to discuss the soul in order to be liberated from suffering. And if we enter this discussion, our objective is sidelined and we get entangled in a web of philosophy. Therefore it's best to keep away from it.

Kaundinya: Great, Gotama! Now you are talking nonsense! No soul and no austerities—what's left of religion then? If you knock out these



supports of religion, the whole edifice is bound to collapse! The man who left this place must have been Mara in disguise—he confused you! We were convinced that these severe austerities would lead you to self-knowledge, and that you would discover a plain and simple path to Nirvana! Today you’ve suddenly disappointed us!

Bodhisattva: That can’t be helped. From now on you should continue your task independently, and I shall carry on my search in the direction I think is right.

(Curtain.)

#### SCENE 4

Sutradhar: Bodhisattva has given up his austerities. After gradually increasing his intake of food, he is regaining his health, and now he goes to the nearby villages to beg for food. The group of five monks has left him in the belief that he has strayed from his religious quest, and gone to Varanasi. (Exit.)

(Place: Bodhisattva’s hut. On the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight in Vaishakh, Bodhisattva is sitting on a seat made of grass. In front of him sit a couple of peasants on one side, and Sujata with two friends on the other.)

Sujata: Venerable Sir, how is your health now?

Bodhisattva: My health is good now. I don’t feel tired when I go begging for food, as I used to.

Sujata: Venerable Sir, I have wanted to ask you a question for a long time, but felt shy.

Bodhisattva: Don’t feel shy; ask what you want without hesitation.

Sujata: Venerable Sir, you are so wise; why then did you risk your life by practising such severe austerities?

Bodhisattva: Surely you know that most *shramanas* practise austerities.

Sujata: I have seen the austerities of many *shramanas*, but never anything like yours.

Bodhisattva: Ordinary austerities didn’t help me to gain the essential knowledge. That’s why I went to the extreme. But the result was that I lost all my strength and even the capacity to think. Then I suddenly remembered a childhood incident. When I went to our fields as a child, I would sit under a *jambhul* tree and meditate. That would bring me unalloyed satisfaction. If I was able to experience the happiness of

meditation at a young age, the question was why I had lost the capacity now. I realized that this was the result of austerities, and abandoned them. My five companions thought that I had lost my religious purpose and they left me. If you and your friends hadn’t looked after my food requirements in that condition, I wouldn’t have survived those austerities. I’m grateful to you.

Sujata: Venerable Sir, it is *pournima* tomorrow. We would like you to take your food at our house.

Bodhisattva: And who are these men?

A Man: We are residents of a nearby village. We used to give food to your companions. We felt very sad when you gave up your austerities.

Bodhisattva: A couple of days ago I saw two of you in your village. But I received no food in your village.

The Man: That’s because our people are against you. Our villagers heard from your companions that you oppose austerities; so they all decided not to give you food.

Bodhisattva: In that case, why are you here?

The Man: One of Sujatabai’s friends came to our village and explained to us that it isn’t right to do so. There may be a religious path that lies midway between rituals and austerities. Therefore we decided to invite you to our village for a meal tomorrow, and to hear from you about your religious path.

Bodhisattva: I strongly believe that there must be a religious path that lies midway between rituals and austerities, but I haven’t found it yet. How then can I come and explain it to you? And as Sujata has already invited me tomorrow, I can’t accept your invitation. I’m grateful to all the villagers around for having helped me by giving food to my companions while I practised austerities.

The Man: We pray that you may soon discover the religious path that you’re looking for.

(Sujata, her friends, and the villagers do namaskar to Bodhisattva one by one, and leave. Curtain.)

#### SCENE 5

Sutradhar: Today is Vaishakh Pournima. Sujata and her friends got up early and took great pains to prepare an excellent sweet dish of milk. When Bodhisattva came to beg for food, Sujata gave it to him.

Bodhisattva took it, went to the bank of the Nairanjara, bathed in the river, and had his meal on the river bank. After his meal he rested under a tree there. Now, in the evening, he has left that spot and is heading for a peepul tree in a solitary spot.

(Exit Sutradhar and enter Bodhisattva. A peasant named Swastika is cutting grass on the right side of the path along the way.)

Swastika: Venerable Sir, where are you going at this time of the evening?

Bodhisattva: I'm going to spend the night under the peepul tree.

Swastika: Venerable Sir, that spot is quite deserted. Why do you want to go there at night?

Bodhisattva: Exactly such a deserted spot is required for pure samadhi. Let that be. Will you give me a little grass?

Swastika: Why a little—take a whole sheaf. Come, I'll bring it along and make you a fine bed.

Bodhisattva: I'm not going there to sleep. I want to meditate. Just give me a handful.

Swastika: Shall I come with you?

Bodhisattva: No, let me go alone.

Swastika: As you wish.

(Swastika gives Bodhisattva a handful of grass. Bodhisattva brings it to a peepul tree, spreads it, and sits on it meditating. In a short while three daughters of Mara come dancing. Bodhisattva remains still.)

First Daughter of Mara: What a hypocritical and cruel man! We've come here to entertain him, and there he sits like a stone!

Second Daughter of Mara: Look, he has no thinking capacity left. How can he speak?

Third Daughter of Mara: That's why I say—why should we break our heads against this stone? Come on, let's go.

(The three leave and Mara enters. He is followed by his army, in various dreadful disguises.)

Mara: O Gotama, what's the matter with you? You're sitting motionless as a stone even after seeing such a beautiful dance. You're probably not in your senses.

Bodhisattva: O Mara, I'm absolutely in my senses. The enjoyment of various objects is your first army. What untoward deed would a man not commit when surrounded by it? Domestic quarrels, feuds among

castes, wars among nations—all these arise from the desire for objects of enjoyment. But it has had no effect on me—as you can see.

Mara: If you give up objects of enjoyment and wander about in forests in this fashion, you will soon be dissatisfied and sad.

Bodhisattva: Dissatisfaction is your second army. I am wary of it. It'll not be able to defeat me.

Mara: In that case, you'll starve to death like a destitute.

Bodhisattva: Starvation is your third army. I've learnt from an early age to endure hunger and thirst. I'm not afraid of this army of yours.

Mara: You can't gain a kingdom, which is why you wish to become the leader of the *shramanas*. Fine, keep trying.

Bodhisattva: Ambition is your fourth army. I recognize it—it can't attack me.

Mara: Look, if you have no ambition, just lie down quietly.

Bodhisattva: Sloth is your fifth army. You're trying to hand me over to it, but you won't succeed.

(A sudden sound of war drums and other military instruments. The soldiers of Mara make a loud noise and surround Bodhisattva.)

Mara: Have you come to your senses yet?

Bodhisattva: Look, this is your sixth army. I've lived in dreadful places and developed fearlessness. Therefore this, your army of fear, will not be able to give me even gooseflesh.

Mara: You insane man, why are you struggling unnecessarily? I've seen many like you; they struggle, but don't succeed. All their effort is wasted!

Bodhisattva: This doubt is your seventh army. It can't impede me on my right path.

Mara: Oh, you're so proud! Fine! This pride is good.

Bodhisattva: Pride is your eighth army. It can't conquer me.

Mara: All right, so you don't want pride. But at least you want recognition, honour, felicitation—don't you?

Bodhisattva: That is also your army—which is followed by the army of self-glorification and censuring others. But they are powerless against the weapon of my true wisdom.

(Sudden darkness everywhere and shouts from Mara's armies. Then, a faint light.)

Bodhisattva: O Mara, if a man does not want suffering, he has to

extinguish craving. I now begin to see the path to the extinction of craving. So you had better take your armies and run—that is your only defence!

(Darkness again, flashes of lightning. But Bodhisattva cannot be seen. Flowers are showered from the sky and the following prayer is heard being chanted.)

Victory to the Buddha, victory to the Enlightened One!

To him who gives knowledge and compassion to the people, and sight to those blinded by hatred!

Your Middle Path will save many and remove the suffering of those overcome by disease and old age!

You are now free from all debts—who else but you can save all creatures in this world?

Arise, O Brave, O Victor in war, O Leader of the people—this is the humble prayer we make in unison!

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The life and writings of Dharmanand Kosambi (1876–1947), pioneering scholar of Pali and Buddhist Studies, comprise the substance of this book.

Born in rural Goa, Dharmanand came under the spell of the Buddha's teachings during his adolescence. As described in his long autobiographical memoir (included here), at an early age he set off on an incredible journey of austere self-training across the length and breadth of Britain's Indian Empire, halting to educate himself at places connected with Buddhism. His sojourns included living in Sri Lanka to master Pali as a novice-scholar, in a Burmese cave as a bhikkhu, and in some viharas of North India — begging for monastic sustenance — as well as in Nepal and Sikkim which he reached after arduous, sometimes barefoot, treks. Over these itinerant years Dharmanand acquired such mastery of the Buddhist canon that he was variously appointed to teach and research at Calcutta, Iktoda, Harvard, and Leningrad.

As a thinker Dharmanand blended Buddhist ethics, Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of truth and non-violence, and the ideals of socialism. He exchanged letters with the Mahatma, worked for his causes, and died in the approved Buddhist/Jain manner by voluntary starvation at Sevagram ashram. Arguably, no Indian scholar's life has been as exemplary as Dharmanand's, or has approximated as closely to the nobility and saintliness of the Mahatma's.

Despite his mastery of several languages, Dharmanand chose to write in Marathi because of his strong region-specific commitment. Consequently, very few today are familiar with his copious output in Buddhist Studies, and fewer still with his contribution to social and political thought.

By translating and marshalling his most significant writings, Meera Kosambi shows the manifold dimensions of Dharmanand's personality, and the profoundly moral character of his intellectual journeys. Her Introduction also contextualizes the life, career, and achievement of one of modern India's greatest scholar-savants.

Front photo of Dharmanand Kosambi  
by his son D.D. Kosambi

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